Introduction to Doras Luimní

Vision
Doras Luimní is an Non Government Organisation based in Limerick that supports the rights of asylum seekers, refugees and migrant workers. Doras have been doing this work for 10 years.

Our mission statement is:
To promote and protect the rights of all migrants, including asylum seekers, refugees and migrant workers. Its role is to support migrants on a personal level, while engaging in advocacy with them and for their collective interests.

Our vision for Ireland is:
A society where equality and respect for the human rights of migrants are social norms. Our core values are rooted in the human rights framework, with a belief in equality and non-discrimination in both public and private life. We believe that it is a moral imperative to be welcoming towards new communities arriving in Ireland, and to extend particular support to the most vulnerable amongst them.

Origins of Doras
In February 2000, a group of people came together, with a shared concern about the needs of a group of asylum seekers who were expected to arrive in Limerick. The members of the group were drawn from all walks of life. Some had worked overseas in the developing world. Others came out of interest in other cultures. The group also includes members from different Churches and Religious Communities in the city.

What’s in a Name?
The name Doras Luimní was chosen because it suggests a door open in welcome and hospitality.

Advocacy and Campaigns
Doras Luimní works in collaboration with local and national organisations to inform local and national government, civil service agents and institutions around actions and policies that impact on or affect migrants.

We continue to develop policy papers and briefings on issues that are directly affecting refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in Limerick City and its environs. We advocate locally and nationally on specific issues of concern by engaging with the media and policy makers. This work is funded by Atlantic Philanthropies and the One Foundation.

Issue: How Irish Politicians Construct Transnational EU Migrants
How Irish Politicians Construct
Transnational EU Migrants

Research commissioned by
Doras Luimní

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Executive summary

Research context
Inward migration from EU member states is an important component of Irish immigration, with EU citizens constituting the majority of non-Irish immigrants to Ireland in the period 2005-2009.

Eastern European immigrants have been especially hard hit by the recession. Many have emigrated as a consequence, but significant numbers have chosen to remain.

International research indicates that recessionary periods may be accompanied by a decline in the quality of relations between the majority population and migrant groups as the latter are at risk of being scapegoated for the economic downturn experienced by all.

In this economic and social context, political leadership on the matter of immigration is of crucial importance. Political parties have a key role to play in framing how the public understand the issue and impact of immigration.

Methodology
This research study examines the manner in which politicians construct non-Irish EU immigrants to Ireland by analysing the content of statements attributed to this group in the print media.

The decision to examine politicians’ statements made through the print media, rather than through government or party press releases was informed by a desire to analyse those statements which are most accessible to the public and therefore most likely to influence public opinion.

Print media content was sampled from a national Broadsheet (Irish Independent) and two local imprints (The Limerick Leader and The Limerick Post).
Conclusions

The sample of articles analysed was dominated by statements from centre-right parties in the form of Fianna Fáil and Fianna Gael representatives.

In the sample analysed, politicians of the left tended to be supportive of immigrants. Statements attributed to representatives of the Socialist party and Sinn Fein defended the rights of migrant workers, while the vast majority of comments attributed to representatives of Labour expressed a pro-immigrant stance. Nonetheless, a representative of the Labour party was among those who recommended restrictive policies in relation to welfare.

In the sample analysed, statements emanating from Fianna Fáil representatives were much more commonly pro-immigrant than anti-immigrant in their orientation. However, the vast majority of such pro-immigrant statements were framed as rebuttals of anti-immigrant claims and positions rather than as agenda-setting frameworks of understanding in their own right.

Statements attributed to representatives of Fine Gael were more likely to construct immigration as a social problem than those attributed to representatives of Fianna Fáil. Nonetheless, those emanating from the party spokesperson on immigration were overwhelmingly positive in orientation. Problematising statements by local Fine Gael representatives impacted on the overall picture of this party’s stance.

Analysis demonstrated that some representatives of mainstream parties contribute to a discourse whereby migrants are constructed as fraudulent, as burdens on the economy and as participating in ‘bogus marriages of convenience’.

Representatives on both the left and right of the political spectrum were found to commonly address the issue of immigration as a social problem, whether by contributing to its framing as a problem, or by seeking to contradict its problematisation. Across the sample as a whole, the majority of statements in support of migrant rights are framed as a defence of these communities. The rebuttal of negative framings may in fact serve to reinforce, rather than undermine, their perceived salience. Providing alternative frameworks of understanding may be more
effective in redirecting debate. Both government and opposition party representatives are in danger of being ensnared in a reactive approach to immigration whereby the course of the debate is set by the problematisation of the issue.

There were a number of issues relating to the themes identified in our analysis, on which our sample contained little political commentary. These issues included informed discussions of unemployed foreign workers’ social welfare entitlements; the lack of recognition of foreign educational qualifications in Ireland; lack of discussion on the support services required by victims of trafficking and / or the state’s responsibility to accommodate, protect and assist victim of trafficking; and the political integration of migrants. While we acknowledge that our sample is by no means a complete record of political statements relating to EU migrants in 2008 and 2009, the absence of these issues from our sample does suggest that they did not attain a high profile during this period.

In spite of the politicisation of particular issues, this research suggests an overall dearth of significant ideological debate on the issue of immigration in Ireland in the period 2008-2009.

Failures by parties both in and out of government to address immigration and integration as important policy areas and the reticence of some party representatives to communicate on these issues to the public creates a vacuum, which may be filled by those who adopt an anti-immigrant stance.

In the absence of the guidance provided by a clear party line, party members may disseminate statements which are ill-informed, anti-immigrant or which their parties would not support. Where parties fail to publicly and effectively censure such claims or proposals, it is argued that they effectively give them credence. In our sample, there are examples of such failures. Political leadership requires that parties counter misinformation with accurate data and provide their membership and the public with the alternative frameworks of understanding to interpret the meaning and significance of same.

This research documents that in an Irish context the framing of immigration and
proposals regarding immigration policy have been accompanied by accusations of racism in a number of instances. It is essential that we name and address racism where it manifests. However, spurious accusations of racism may be used as a strategic tool to effectively terminate debate for reasons other than the pursuit of an anti-racist agenda.

**Recommendations**

- We encourage all political representatives to recognise the status of migrants as community members, constituents, potential party members and voters, and to represent them as such in their public discourse.

- We recommend non-governmental organisations such as Doras Luimní continue to engage in voter registration drives directed towards members of migrant communities.

- We recommend that all political parties recommit themselves to the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism’s (NCCRI) anti-racism protocol. Such a framework is, we hold, necessary to support the anti-racist stance adopted by individual political representatives, and to mainstream this approach. Moreover, we support the reformulation of this protocol to apply to the daily exercise of political representation and office, rather than just in respect of election campaigns.

- In light of the previous recommendation we would urge non-governmental organisations such as Doras Luimní to continue campaigning for political parties to renew their commitment to the NCCRI’s anti-racism protocol and for the extension of the protocol in line with the recommendations made above.

- We reiterate the recommendations of other such as Fanning, Shaw, O’Connell, & Williams (2007, p.4) in advocating the further extension of the anti-racism protocol to include a commitment from all political parties to proactively cultivate migrant political participation as voters, party members and candidates for elected office.
• We urge non-governmental organisations such as Doras Luimmí to continue monitoring political parties’ initiatives with regard to including immigrant candidates and voters, as well as addressing the needs and interests of immigrant communities.

• It is essential that we name and address racism when it manifests, and the role of our political representatives in displaying leadership in this regard is critical. Political parties and representatives who make accusations of racism should support those claims.

• We encourage party leaders to enforce their own association’s commitment to principles or protocols which espouse inclusion and anti-racism, by actively responding to contravention of these principles by their members.

• We recommend that Doras Luimmí address complaints regarding anti-immigrant statements directly to party executives.

• At the local level, the launch of *Integrating Limerick: Limerick City and County Integration Plan 2010-2012* is to be commended, as is the focus on consultation of migrant networks which contributed to its development and is highlighted in its recommendations. We encourage Limerick local authorities to follow this achievement with the development of a community cohesion protocol, such as that developed by counterparts in the UK, which committed council members not to “create or exacerbate divisions between different groups within the community” (Crawley 2007, p.499). Limerick City council should join Galway and Dublin in becoming a signatory to the European Coalition of Cities against Racism¹, which would enable them to avail of policy, technical and scientific supports in engaging with the diverse communities resident within Limerick City.

• We encourage political parties and political representatives to commit themselves to evidence-based policy making in the fields of immigration and integration.

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¹ For further information see [www.unesco.org/shs/citiesgainstracism](http://www.unesco.org/shs/citiesgainstracism)
• We urge non-governmental organisations such as Doras Luimní to continue to seek right of reply where media outlets reproduce assertions or proposals by politicians, which are misinformed or supported by reference to evidence of questionable authority.

• In the interests of transparency, we encourage all political parties to communicate their policies on immigration and integration in order to provide the public with leadership in this important area of political and public discourse.

• Party policies on immigration and integration should be clearly communicated to party members. We urge party leadership to consider that, although they may not represent party policy, a failure to publicly and effectively censure problematic claims or proposals disseminated by their membership may unintentionally legitimise those statements.

• We recommend that political parties and representatives seeking to counter the problematisation of migrants proactively develop and present alternative frameworks of understanding rather than merely reactively rebutting the problematising statement. This approach is held to offer greater potential effect.

• We commend to political parties the importance of sustaining and developing the institutional framework which supports an equality agenda in Ireland. We urge that this institutional framework, consisting of agencies such as the Equality Authority, the Equality Tribunal and the National Employment Rights Authority (and, before their termination, the National Consultative Committee against Racism and Interculturalism and the National Action Plan Against Racism) be prioritised in a recessionary period, in which international experience tells us that anti-immigrant sentiment tends to increase.

• Our analysis suggests that the range of political voices represented in media discourse on immigration is limited. We assert that the mass media is an important site for disseminating ways of understanding migrants, immigration and integration. To impact public understandings of immigration, some parties may
need to be more strategic in ensuring their messages are represented in media discourse.
Overview

The Irish economy
Over the last number of years (prior to the start of the current recession) migration has become an increasingly important political issue in the wider context of social and economic change, with policy debate focused on a number of propositions. Firstly, that replacement migration will be needed to meet demographic shortfalls and provide for an ageing population. Secondly, that immigration was as an engine of economic growth in what had become a competitive global skills market. In this regard immigration was seen as a ‘brain gain’ and a way to avoid labour and skill shortages, contributing to economic growth and slowing wage inflation in the process.

Ireland experienced strong economic growth from the later part of the 1990s up to the middle of the 2000s, with the number in employment almost doubling to 2.1 million in 2007. Furthermore, the rate of unemployment dropped to approximately 4.5 per cent in 2007. The openness of Ireland’s economy in 2007 was reflected in strong migratory flows and high levels of foreign direct investment. In fact, in that year net inward migration stood at over 67,000 people (Economic and Social Research Institute 2010). In 2007, labour force participation rates were up to 80% for migrants, compared to a national participation rate of 64.5%, and in 2008 foreign-nationals comprised 16% of the labour force (FAS 2009). Migrant workers tended to be concentrated in the areas of Hotels and Restaurants, Wholesale / Retail, Manufacturing, Financial services and Health (Awad 2009). By the end of 2006 displacement of indigenous workers was still not a major or widespread phenomenon, however FÁS (2007, p.7) warned that “displacement could become an issue for low-skill workers should there be an economic slowdown. Much would depend, in such circumstances, on the extent to which immigration to Ireland fell rapidly and existing foreign nationals returned home.”

The EU national population of Ireland
Ireland has experienced increasing national diversity in the population. The question on nationality, included for the first time in the 2002 census, was repeated in 2006.
The number of transnational migrants who were usually resident in the State at census time increased from 224,000 to 420,000 (an increase of 87%) over the same period.

Although returning Irish emigrants and immigration from non-EU countries were particularly prevalent prior to 2004, since the expansion of the European Union Ireland has experienced a significant increase in the proportion of immigrants from EU states (Quinn 2010). Between 2002 and 2006 the fastest growing category apart from Irish or UK nationals, were EU nationals (6.6% of the population). Polish nationals numbered 63,300 while the number of Lithuanian nationals was 24,600 (CSO Census 2006). This trend continued in the period to 2009: “Between 2005 and 2009 an average of 44 per cent of the immigration flow and 54 per cent of the non-Irish immigration flow has been made up of nationals of EU States that acceded in 2004 together with Romania and Bulgaria which acceded in 2006” (Quinn 2010, p.3).

The Census showed that Dublin South City had the highest concentration of foreign-nationals anywhere in the state, with the figure standing at 18.7% of the total population. Of this figure, 9.3% were EU citizens. In the context of Limerick, the census of 2006 showed that of 149,468 individuals resident in Limerick, 5.8% were non-Irish EU citizens. 3,035 were UK nationals, 2877 were Polish, 627 were Lithuanian nationals and 2,189 were from other EU25 countries (Health Service Executive 2009).

**The impact of recession**

Economic growth slowed in the second half of 2007 with Ireland eventually moving into a recession, which deepened in 2009. The impact of this economic collapse manifested itself in the labour market, with the numbers on the Live Register increasing by 70% in 2008 while the average rate of unemployment for 2009 is estimated to have reached almost 12 per cent (Economic and Social Research Institute 2010). The construction, retail, hotel and restaurant sectors (sectors which had particularly high concentrations of migrant labour) experienced a significant decline. Accordingly there was acceleration in the rate of unemployment among immigrants for much of 2008, especially among accession state nationals, exceeding the rate of decline among natives (Barrett 2009).
The economic downturn would also appear to have had a major impact on the migration patterns of EU nationals to and from Ireland in 2008 / 2009. Of the 65,100 emigrating from the state between April 2008 and April 2009, EU12 nationals were by far the largest group. Additionally, immigration to Ireland from the EU12 countries manifested the largest fall of any group (from 33,700 to 13,500) between April 2008 and April 2009 (CSO 2009, p.1). Yet, a significant proportion of immigrants appeared to remain in Ireland despite the decline in economic fortunes (Barrett 2009).

The economic downturn saw the public finances rapidly move into deficit. The situation worsened throughout 2008 and the general government deficit reached 14% of GDP in 2009. It was estimated that the level of national debt may have exceeded 41 per cent of GDP in 2009, up from 12 per cent in 2007 (Economic and Social Research Institute 2010). Experts expressed concern that this vastly changed situation in the economy might negatively impact attitudes to immigrants (Barrett 2009).

**The importance of political leadership**

In this economic and social context, political leadership on the matter of immigration is of crucial importance. This is because political elites, political parties – or processes implemented or controlled by political parties – are responsible for framing the issue of immigration, and for how, when, and where these issues arrive on the political spectrum (Schain 2008, p.465). Political elites also have substantial influence over the general publics’ attitudes towards immigration. If all political parties and political elites are supportive of a particular policy, it may well result in “politiclly aware individuals … incorporating these preferences into their own belief systems” (McLaren 2001, p.87). With a more differentiated spectrum of political positions, individuals have a choice to align with the party advocating policies most in agreement with their own ideological convictions (McLaren 2001, p.87).

**Political parties and immigration**

At a pragmatic level, immigration issues matter to political parties for reasons of political opportunity. Firstly, immigration expands the electorate. But what distinguishes “immigrant voters from native voters is that they have not been
previously socialised into the national political culture through family experience, heritage, or national events - experiences which may have shaped the voting patterns of native voters” (Andersen 1979 cited in Schain 2008, p.466). Political parties also use the issue of immigration as a means by which to move dedicated native voters from one party to another. This strategy usually focuses on national identity and the challenge posed to this identity by immigrants and their “integration into the national community” (Schain 2008, p.467). The political opportunity in this instance lies in the problematisation of immigrants as a way to adjust the existing electoral base (Money 1999 cited in Schain 2008, pp.466-467).

International literature suggests that immigration poses a more severe challenge for the centre-right than for the left. In general, parties of the left have tended to be supportive of immigration and immigrants as they are viewed as additional working-class electoral support. However, left-wing parties have also supported restrictive immigration policies. Such instances usually occur when employers are seen to be using immigrant labour to deflate wages or because reaction to immigrants by displaced native working-class voters has made them electorally susceptible. Parties of the centre-right experience similar tensions regarding issues of immigration. For these parties, immigration is of substantial benefit to their “business wing”, but they face a challenge to please those business interests without disaffecting their “identity wing” who are concerned about national identity (Tichenor 2002, pp.169 – 175 cited in Schain 2008, pp.467-468).

Some commentators would argue that political parties’ are often merely ‘conduits of public opinion’. But political parties are substantially more than conduits; structuring as well as reflecting voter opinion (see for example Lens 2002). Political parties are ultimately composed of a hierarchy of ideological individuals (Bale 2008, p.453). Thus, if political elites and political parties play a key role in creating public attitudes, it is important to investigate the discourses constructed in relation to migration (McLaren 2001, p.88).

**Irish political reaction to immigration**

During the boom period, all Irish political parties seemed to accept the economic benefits of immigration. However, the state’s response to immigration after 1996
became relatively restrictive, in the process conflating both asylum and immigration, which in turn constructed the latter as a “single problematic area, involving increased state expenditure” (Garner 2007, p.116). Considine and Dukelow (2010, p.412) assert that Irish immigration policy “is primarily concerned with border control and law and order, including the regulation of migrants’ movement in and out of the state, and their residence within the state”.

While there may be little support for groups who could be classified as being on the far-right of the political spectrum in Ireland; that is not to say such groups have had no influence on mainstream politics. Lentin & McVeigh (2006) demonstrate that the Immigration Control Platform (ICP)\(^2\) for example made distinctions between immigration from different places, which when combined with language which portrayed “immigration as invasion”, served to construct mainstream discourse on immigration in terms of its problematisation. In such a context, the ICP played a prominent role in creating a discourse where “Irishness [was] … politically racialized”, through a language calling for the defence of Irish “heritage, citizenship and resources against claims of un-assimilable Others” (Garner 2007, p.117). Garner (2007, p.117) asserts that this process ‘allowed’ ordinary Irish citizens to embrace such opinions without ever taking into consideration that they may be racist.

The ICPs’ calls for stricter immigration controls did not go unnoticed with a number of election candidates articulating anti-immigrant opinions in cynical vote catching exercises. A former Mayor of Cork was expelled from the Labour party in 2002 for a verbal attack on ‘illegal immigrants’ in the city in 2001. Nonetheless, sitting TD Noel O Flynn (Fianna Fáil, Cork North Central) was subsequently accused of arousing anti-immigrant sentiments in speeches in 2002, accusations which despite local and national condemnation, did little damage to his election campaign (in fact he increased his majority in that election) (Garner 2007, p.116). Garner (2007, p.116) asserts that the ICPs’ calls for AIDS testing for migrants appeared in Fine Gael’s 2002 manifesto and their demand for the mandatory fingerprinting of all foreign nationals was “echoed by the head of the Garda National Immigration Bureau in 2003”.

\(^2\) The ICP first emerged prior to the 2002 general election in Ireland.
Smith argues that (2008, p.528) nonetheless, immigration was not really a highly politicised issue in Ireland by 2007 and that centre-right parties saw little electoral advantage to be had in contravening what she perceives as a “liberal consensus” on immigration, a consensus which arose in part because the possible ‘negative’ social impacts of immigration had been minimised by a sustained period of economic growth. But the first signs of economic contraction saw concerns being expressed by Trade Unions in particular that migrant workers would displace Irish workers (Smith 2008, p.427). This position was supported by the then leader of the Labour Party Pat Rabbitte, who asserted that it was outrageous that the Irish government handed out €4.3 million of taxpayers’ money to Irish Ferries, who were in the process of replacing Irish workers with cheap migrant labour (Irish Times 2007 cited in Smith 2008, p.427).

Fine Gael leader Enda Kenny sought to stimulate debate on the issue of immigration during the run up to a general election in 2007. Smith (2008) asserts that he faced numerous criticisms, at least in part because he spoke of Ireland’s Christian and Celtic heritage. Deputy Kenny and numerous Fine Gael election candidates chose to instigate discussion by problematising the relationship they perceived between immigration and such issues as crime, traffic offences, and pressures on public services and the education system in particular (Smith 2008, p.427). Interestingly, in 2007 the Progressive Democrats’ (whose neo-liberal ethos had up until this time led them to project an entirely positive view of economic migrants) election manifesto pledges on immigration now stated that “No foreign national has an absolute right to come here” (Progressive Democrats 2007, p.59 cited in Smith 2008, p.427).

Do Irish political parties have different migration policies?

In Ireland, “for all the rhetorical jousting” it is argued that there has been little variation in migration policy irrespective of who has been in government. This consensus on migration policy is “permissive” and “pragmatic” (Smith 2008 cited in Bale 2008, pp.456-457). There are numerous tensions which must be negotiated by centre-right parties, especially when they are in opposition, the primary one being that it is difficult to disagree with government (economic) immigration policy “without risking being portrayed as more extreme” than they may wish to be (Bale 2008, p.464) and thus alienating potential voters. An additional factor of course is the
knowledge that economic migration is “impossible to promise to stop when most of it comes from the EU” (Bale 2008, p.464). It is interesting that none of Ireland’s political parties have advocated the more restrictive policies of some of our fellow EU member states (Bale 2008, p.464). Thus, while concerns relating to pressure on public services and English language teaching in particular have appeared on the Irish political landscape over the last number of years, it is argued that both Labour and Fine Gael have increasingly critiqued the government parties less on their immigration policies than on their capability in employing those policies (Smith 2008, p.416).
Methodology

This research study examined the manner in which politicians construct non-Irish EU immigrants to Ireland by analysing the content of statements attributed to this group in the print media. We have endeavoured to document statements about, depictions of, and information about immigrants, which politicians have disseminated through the print media; to identify the constructions to which they contribute and any misinformation in the content of their statements.

We chose to examine statements made through the print media, rather than through government or party press releases. This decision was informed by a desire to analyse those political statements which are most accessible to the public and therefore most likely to influence public opinion. Certainly there is evidence that media content which problematises immigrants can contribute to negative attitudes (see Short and Magna 2002 cited in Danso et al 2007, p.1121). Where socially distant groups are involved, the mass media is often the public’s key means of learning about these groups. “People’s perceptions of immigration are shaped not by statistics, but by their daily interactions and experiences, which are heavily influenced by their exposure to media reports and images” (Hajer and Versteeg 2009, p. 1).

What appears as news is never random. Editorial decision making as to what is and is not published is of major significance in the shaping of what the public hear and read about. While acknowledging the important role played by editorial staff in the active selection and de-selection of news items, our interest is primarily in what appears in print and the possible impact that it may have in informing (or not) public opinion and understanding of the issues which are the focus of this report. We recognise that journalistic and, more significantly, editorial processes impact upon which of the statements made by political figures are published. However, we also assert that politicians, as public figures, are highly conscious of the public nature of all statements they make in their capacity as elected representatives. We have restricted our analysis to the statements attributed to politicians and excluded the journalists interpretations of these statements from our analysis.
The methodology employed adopted a content analysis strategy. Specifically, we have undertaken a qualitative content analysis of statements published over a two year period. We examined statements made by elected political representatives - including city and county councillors, and members of the Oireachtas – about EU migrants. While an amount of research has been undertaken on migrants, it has primarily focused on asylum seekers. Far less consideration has been given to EU migrants.

Media content

Print media content was sampled from three newspapers - a national Broadsheet (Irish Independent) and two local imprints (The Limerick Leader and The Limerick Post). The Limerick imprints were chosen for their relevance to the local Limerick context within which our funder operates. The local print media is dominated by the Limerick Leader which is owned by the Johnston Group. Previously owned by the Buckley family and for a short while by the Leinster Leader Group, the Limerick Leader publishes 6 titles – The Limerick Leader City Edition; The Limerick Leader County Edition; The Limerick Leader West Limerick Edition; The Limerick Chronicle and a smaller tabloid version of the Limerick Leader on Mondays and Wednesdays. The main titles contain a mixture of local and regional news and current affairs and all have a growing on-line presence. At the time of undertaking our research, the local print media also included two free-sheet titles – The Limerick Independent and The Limerick Post. The latter is a tabloid newspaper with 50,000 copies distributed weekly and has a strong focus on the local economy.

The Irish Independent was chosen as the national newspaper with the highest circulation figures within the period of the study. Its average circulation figures in the second half of 2009, for example, were 581,000 (ABC 2010). The time period within which we selected articles was 01/01/08 – 31/12/09. We selected this timeframe in order to enable us to examine the possibility of change in the nature of political statements in a period of transition from prosperity to recession.

We began by searching both Nexis Lexis (a searchable online database of printed materials which includes back issues of the Irish Independent) and the proprietary archive of the Limerick Leader for the following terms: ‘Immigration’, ‘Immigrant’, ‘Migrant’, ‘Foreigner’, ‘Foreign National’, ‘Non-National’, ‘Non-Citizen’,

The Limerick Leader search engine identified far fewer articles referring to Non-Irish EU migrants than the search of the Irish Independent, a result which we argue is accounted for in part by the local remit of this newspaper. However, the Leader’s proprietary database is also limited in terms of its functionality. As such, the sample of statements relating to the local Limerick context was supplemented by also sampling the Limerick Post. Although the Limerick Post is digitised, editions published prior to December 2009 are not searchable in this format. As such, each of the 102 editions of relevance to this project were read individually for the purpose of identifying articles of relevance. All articles returned were read in full to determine firstly, their relevance to non-Irish EU immigrants to Ireland and secondly, whether they included a statement about this category or individuals from this category, made by politicians. Duplicate articles and letters from readers were excluded. For example the search of the Limerick Post returned 68 articles concerning EU migrants of which only 3 were relevant to the specifics of this particular project. Our sampling strategy returned a final total of 71 articles (Irish Independent – 53; Limerick Leader – 15; Limerick Post - 3) which were then analysed.

While we do not claim that our sampling strategy has produced a complete sample of relevant political statements attaining media coverage in 2008-2009, we do assert that, by focusing on two Limerick imprints and the most widely circulated national newspaper, our strategy has identified the highest profile statements and those that reached the widest audience in that period, in our geographical areas of interest (Limerick and nationally).

**Analysis**

Articles which met the sampling criteria were download into Nvivo (a computer aided

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3 A similar approach would not have been possible in the case of the Limerick Leader given the large numbers of editions published on a weekly basis, while the Limerick Post publishes only one edition per week.
qualitative data analysis software package), where they were subjected to qualitative content analysis. Content analysis can be defined as “… a research technique for making valid and replicable inferences from texts … to the contexts of their use (Krippendorf 2004, p.18). Content analysis involves identifying themes, concepts, and patterns thereof, within the data. We infer meaning through interpreting these patterns. Themes and concepts may emerge from the data as a result of close reading and constant comparison, a process facilitated by sensitivity to:

- The relationship between the research question and the text
- The relationship between the texts and the context to which meaning will be inferred.

In the following section the results of this analysis are presented under headings relating to the thematic categories emerging from the data. These are structured into two chapters, the first presenting an analysis of comments relating to the national area and the second presenting statements pertaining to the Limerick context.
Analysis of Statements in the National Arena

The Irish economy

In 2008, the Irish economy collapsed into recession following more than a decade in which the annual GNP growth rate had averaged 7%. Quinn (2010, p.2) notes that “…international experience shows that there is potential for tensions to develop as competition for work increases; a situation not helped by the fact that Ireland’s integration policy is as yet poorly developed”.

The number of Personal Public Service (PPS) numbers issued to EU10-nationals in 2008 was down 40% on the number issued in 2007 (FÁS 2009, p.3). Loyal (2010, p.90) calculates that by the fourth quarter of 2009, immigrants from the EU accession states were experiencing the highest levels of unemployment, compared to any other group of immigrants. Loyal links this trend to their concentration in the sectors worst effected by the recession including construction, hospitality and industry.

In examining the sample we found that 18 articles, all appearing in the Irish Independent, in which politicians spoke about EU migrants had a focus on the economy. The statements came from politicians in Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael. Those speaking about EU migrants in this context included the then Minister for Integration Conor Lenihan, the then Minister for Social and Family Affairs Mary Hanafin, Thomas Byrne TD (Fianna Fáil), the then Lord Mayor of Dublin Eibhlín Byrne (Fianna Fáil), Fine Gael’s Leo Varadkar (Spokesperson on Enterprise, Trade and Employment at that time), Denis Naughten (Spokesperson on Immigration and Integration, September 2007 - July 2010), Senator John Paul Phelan (Fine Gael) and former Mayor of Limerick City Kevin Kiely (Fine Gael) (whose statements are addressed separately in section 4).

In an article entitled ‘Shortage of work leads to drop in immigrants’ (8th October 2008), the then Integration Minister Conor Lenihan warned against projecting "phobias, worries or concerns" about the economic recession onto migrant workers in

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4 On the other hand, by the end of 2009 immigrants from EU-15 member states (excluding Ireland and the UK) evidenced somewhat lower levels of unemployment than Irish nationals (Loyal 2010, p.90).
Ireland. He further stated that research indicated far higher rates of unemployment among migrants than Irish citizens. The Minister continued to highlight this issue in an article entitled ‘Ethnic tensions alert as immigrants fight for jobs’ (29th December 2008). He warned of ‘tensions’ which could develop in the competition for jobs between Irish and immigrant workers as unemployment rose and Irish people returned to sectors of the economy that they had largely abandoned (and which were subsequently filled by migrant labour) during the economic boom. The Minister stated that "there is potential for tension because people project their anger on to ethnic groups when they see their friends, uncles and aunts losing their jobs. You tend to have that pattern, by international evidence. It's not defined that it's going to happen in Ireland, but we have to guard against it."

In the same article, then Integration Minister Conor Lenihan also argued that "we still have a need for immigrant labour, and it is here to stay" (29th December 2008). In the preceding months Minister Lenihan was also on record as insisting that it was "not correct" that transnational migrants were displacing Irish workers (19th July 2008). At this time Minister Lenihan also revealed that the number of transnational migrant workers in receipt of social welfare payments had risen from just 16,000 to 32,000 (19th July 2008).

Concerns about the displacement of Irish workers were apparent in public discourse as far back as 2005 and 2006 (Quinn 2010, p.6; also see Smith 2008, p. 426). Some of the comments analysed in this study of elected representatives’ statements appearing in the media in 2008 and 2009 evidence the persistence of such constructions in political discourse. Minister Lenihan’s statements are as such to be welcomed in that he sought to undermine the politicisation of fear by presenting contradictory evidence. However, Hajer and Versteeg (2009) assert that to effectively oppose divisive and conflict-generating statements politicians need to reframe the issue by presenting the public with alternative understandings of the situation at hand, rather than simply countering the opposing argument. Rebuttals, they argue, often serve to reinforce the original framing in the public mind. Although the content of Minister Lenihan’s statements is to be welcomed there is a danger that the stylistic focus on denial may be counterproductive. A reframing of the issue as one of a requirement for solidarity in recessionary times might be more effective. Nonetheless, the Minister should be

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3 Then Integration Minister Lenihan’s statement is also discussed in the section on racism and discrimination in this report.
credited for responding to the issue as the failure to act at all in the face of ill-informed divisive rhetoric is arguably the far greater ill.

Commenting on the rate of unemployment among migrants, Fine Gael immigration spokesman Denis Naughten said “the figures showed a need to provide extra language support for foreign nationals” and that "by equipping migrants with the required English language skills, it will allow them move up the value chain which will in turn benefit our economy." (4th October 2008). An alternative proposal was introduced by Fine Gael’s Leo Varadkar, who suggested that as unemployed foreign workers cost the State EUR400m every year in dole payments it might be prudent to pay six months of social welfare benefits to foreign national workers prepared to return to their country of origin (see for example 5th September 2008 and 29th September 2008). Mr Varadkar argued that his proposed repatriation scheme would be strictly voluntary. However Fianna Fáil backbencher Thomas Byrne said it was "a very dangerous proposal and sets a new low in Irish politics. It's a repetition of what Fine Gael are at in recent weeks” (5th September 2008) (referring to comments by the party's education spokesman on segregated education – see the section on Education in this report). Furthermore, the then Social and Family Affairs Minister Mary Hanafin said

"All European nationals have free movement. The only people [Mr Varadkar] could be talking about are non-EU nationals, which must mean he was talking about the Africans, which means it's a racist comment… He would want to think where he's putting his foot before he puts it in his mouth. It is undoubtedly racist to do it…We are delighted to have these people; they are making a contribution to our economy. The Irish were never rejected anywhere when things got difficult for them" (10th September 2008).

Leo Varadkar responded to these accusations of racism by stating that "if Fianna Fáil is accusing me of racist comments, then they are guilty of racist acts and . . . hypocrisy” (10th September 2008). However the accusations would appear to have stifled any further debate on this issue. By late September Leo Varadkar said he did not want to comment further on the issue, but did add that "despite the over-reaction from Conor Lenihan and Mary Hanafin, it is already being done on a small scale basis so I don't see why it can't be extended… The Government doesn't want to talk about
immigration. Anyone who says anything is accused of playing the race card. If official Ireland ignores it, it will come back to bite us" (29th September 2008).

It is interesting that, after Mr Varadkar made this argument, a member of his own party, Senator John Paul Phelan, accused a Liberatas candidate for the European Parliament elections of "playing the race card" when that person suggested that given Ireland’s economic difficulties and the rising unemployment rates, no additional foreign nationals should be given residency, but those already resident in Ireland should be allowed remain. Senator Phelan stated "I was shocked at his outrageous statement. This is fantasy economics by Libertas. To try and blame foreign nationals for our economic problems is completely missing the point" (15th May 2009). In the conclusions to this study we discuss the importance of addressing racism in politics, but also the implications that spurious accusations of racism have for the possibilities of an informed debate.

Statements relating to assisting foreign citizens to return ‘home’ suggest an understanding of immigration as a temporary phenomenon (Greenwood and Adshead 2010, p.6; also see Canoy et al., 2006, for a discussion of the limitations of this understanding of migration). However, as asserted in section one many immigrants chose to remain in Ireland even as the recession deepened. Even where employment is the initial impetus for inward migration, other factors such as intimate relationships and Irish children’s affiliation to the nation may result in the decision to remain despite an economic downturn. Loyal (2010, p.88) also asserts that the “…global nature of the recession has meant that even many of the EU nationals who can leave and re-enter without restrictions are unwilling to do so”.

**Welfare**

On May 1st 2004, in the context of an enlarging EU and processes implemented in other existing EU Member States, a habitual residence requirement was introduced into Irish social welfare legislation, which affected all applicants regardless of nationality. Until the introduction of this clause, anyone resident in Ireland for even a short period of time could potentially access a range of social welfare entitlements (MacEinri, 2005 cited in Fagan 2008). However, after this date an applicant had to satisfy the Habitual Residence Condition (HRC) for Jobseeker’s Allowance, State
Pension (Non-Contributory), Blind Pension, Widow’s or Widower’s (Non-Contributory) Pension, Guardian’s Payment (Non-Contributory), One-Parent Family Payment, Carer’s Allowance, Disability Allowance, Supplementary Welfare Allowance, and Child Benefit. In addition, applicants also had to satisfy the same conditions applied to citizens to receive whichever payment they had applied for (Department of Social Protection 2010a, p.4). Under European law, Child Benefit, One Parent Family Payment and Guardian’s Payment (Non-Contributory) are classed as family benefits. In this regard, an applicant need not satisfy the HRC for one of these payments if they are Swiss, or from a country in the European Economic Area, or are employed or self-employed and pay Irish PRSI or receive Irish Jobseeker’s Benefit (Department of Social Protection 2010a, p.9).

Irish and European law list the following five factors which are to be taken into consideration when deciding if someone is habitually resident:

• “Evidence of the applicants settled residence in Ireland such as whether they own or lease a home here, where their close family members live, whether they belong to social or professional associations here, etc.
• How long an applicant has continuously resided in Ireland or other parts of the Common Travel Area.
• The length of and reason for any absence from Ireland.
• The nature and pattern of the applicants’ employment.
• An applicant’s evidence based future intention to live in the Republic of Ireland” (Department of Social Protection 2010a, p.5).

EU nationals or the family members of EU nationals who have legally resided in Ireland for a period of at least 5 years have a right of permanent residence, irrespective of whether they cease to be able to sustain themselves and become dependent on social welfare support. This right of permanent residence no longer applies if the individual is absent from the State for more than 2 years. While the right of permanent residence does not in and of itself satisfy the requirements of the HRC, a deciding welfare officer must give due consideration to this right (Department of Social Protection 2010b).
“The entitlement of EEA nationals to Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) is affected by the provisions of EEC Regulation 1612/68 which deals with the freedom of movement of migrant workers within the EU, including their employment rights and the rights of their families” (Department of Social Protection 2010b). Article 7(2) of this regulation states that a migrant EEA worker has the same social entitlements as a national worker, and a European Court of Justice ruling states that such rights include social benefits which guarantee the minimum means of subsistence (which in this country is SWA). EEA nationals who have been employed since arriving in Ireland may be entitled to SWA, even if they do not satisfy the HRC for other payments (Department of Social Protection 2010b). The guidelines sent to all of Ireland’s community welfare officers state that every case should be examined on its own merit and none of the five factors which are taken into consideration to decide on whether someone satisfies the HRC are conclusive. These guidelines also specify that EU migrant workers who have unbroken employment for 52 weeks qualify for supplementary welfare allowance as long as they remain unemployed. For those EU migrant workers who become unemployed before reaching a year’s continuous employment, the supplementary welfare allowance may be paid for six months (Smith 2010).

The economic crash saw an unparalleled increase in the numbers signing on to the Live Register, which expanded by 121,000 or approximately 71% during 2008 (FÁS 2009, p.3). By August 2009 there were 65,793 EU (non-Irish) citizens on the Live Register (CSO 2010, p.7). FÁS responded by arguing that there was a “need to ensure that sanctions and eligibility conditions are sufficiently tight to ensure that the Irish social welfare system does not become a pull factor for migration at a time when unemployment is rising in many EU countries (FÁS 2009, p.17). This year subsequently saw the practice of the electronic transfer of funds being replaced with the requirement to physically sign on for one’s payment at a post office/social welfare office (FÁS 2009, p.17).

In the context of the preceding discussion it is interesting to note that the Crosscare Migrant Project (CMP) have claimed that increasing numbers of migrant workers from new EU states are being unfairly denied access to social welfare payments because the rules governing the HRC are applied inconsistently. They highlighted the
case of one Polish migrant worker in Mallow, who was refused supplementary welfare allowance despite having lived and worked in Ireland since September 2004. A copy of a letter of appeal sent by the organisation on the migrant’s behalf detailed that he had made a total of 193 paid contributions during his term of employment and was granted jobseeker’s benefit before seeking the basic payment. The migrant subsequently won the appeal and is now receiving the supplementary welfare allowance (Smith 2010).

Our analysis identified 8 articles (in which politicians made statements about EU migrants) with a focus on welfare. Articles containing relevant commentaries on this theme included statements from Labour and Fine Gael politicians only. The politicians in question were Labour’s spokesperson on Social and Family Affairs Roisin Shortall, their deputy leader Joan Burton TD, Fine Gael’s Olwyn Enright TD, former Fine Gael Immigration spokesperson Denis Naughten TD and Fine Gael Cllr Kevin Kiely.

If the general public is to support high levels of welfare spending, particularly in times of economic crisis, then citizens must be kept informed of the needs of those requiring the assistance of the welfare state, the costs of addressing those needs, and the return the state is getting for that investment (Lens 2002). Consequently what is omitted from public discourse is just as important as what is included. Given that the HRC is a key component of the Irish social welfare system; and controversy around the application of the rules governing the HRC, we expected some statements on this issue. However, we instead found that all bar one of the politicians’ statements concerned ‘welfare fraud’ specifically.

Under regulations in existence since 1971, migrant employees from any EU member state can claim child benefit from the EU country in which they work, even if their children are living in their home country. It was interesting then that, it was in 2008 that Labour Party spokesperson on Social and Family Affairs, Roisin Shortall, said there was a need for greater vigilance against child benefit fraud. "They need to keep on top of that because the situation is changing so quickly. There will be huge numbers of people returning to Eastern European countries" (23rd July 2008). She also called for the State to stop such payments abroad, while maintaining them for EU
workers who were living here with their children (5th May 2008). Given that these reciprocal provisions are enshrined in legislation, it was surprising that Ms Shortall would make such a call in the public arena. Indeed, she later accepted that the proposal may be just “aspirational” given that the current payment arrangement is provided for under EU law (O’ Brien 2009).

Prior to the period to which this research relates, a new system was introduced which saw non-Irish EU nationals in receipt of child benefit required to prove that they were still resident or working in Ireland. Between November 2007 and April 2008 the Department of Social and Family Affairs wrote to 27,840 non-Irish EU child benefit recipients, giving them up to 21 days to return proof of residency or employment. A department spokesperson said that "in the case of non-Irish national recipients who are resident in Ireland with their children, certification is requested that the children continue to reside here”, while in the case of non-Irish recipients who are working in Ireland but who have qualified children living in another EU state, certification by their employer of continuing employment is requested” (12th May 2008). 4,960 did not return with proof of residency or employment and payment was suspended. Fine Gael front bench member, Olwyn Enright, subsequently claimed that:

"the percentage of foreign nationals who are claiming fraudulently is higher than Irish nationals. There needs to be communication with other countries to find out if these children exist and then we need proof of where they are living…Fraud is fraud. If you're talking about 5,000 out of about 27,000 -- that is almost a fifth and that's a high proportion. It may seem small but I still see it as significant…That's money that could be going to people who need it more" (12th May 2008).

In addition, Fine Gael immigration spokesman Denis Naughten said the social welfare system encouraged those who were living elsewhere to claim benefits in Ireland. Mr Naughten said "it is clear that this is not working, or we would not have the scale of fraud exposed today…the disclosure that up to 11pc of non-nationals claiming social welfare were not resident in the State again highlights the need to strengthen co-operation between the immigration service and the Department of Social and Family Affairs" (3rd July 2009). Finally, in the same article Olwyn Enright, insisted that an "incalculable number" were still getting away with open fraud against the taxpayer.
The picture painted by both Ms Enright and Mr Naughten, is that of a worst case scenario. The 4,960 cases which had their claims ‘suspended’ were all defined as fraudulent in their discourses on this matter. However, there is no information on whether the actions that led to initial inclusion of these individuals in this category were later rectified (for example as a result of submitting documentation, which was not acceptable as ‘proof of residency or employment’, and later resubmitting documentation which was acceptable). In fact, there are a myriad of scenarios whereby individuals could have had their claim suspended and re-instated at a later date. The claim that all 4,960 cases were fraudulent on the basis that the individuals had not returned ‘proof of residence or employment within the specified 21 days’ requires further support, we argue. Furthermore, although the practice of the electronic transfer of funds for the purposes of unemployment payments was replaced with the requirement to physically sign on for a payment at a post office/social welfare office in 2009, the Government did not see it as necessary to apply this measure to child benefit. It is worth highlighting that in late 2008, then Minister for Social and Family Affairs Minister, Mary Hanafin, had asserted that 95% of foreign workers with PPS numbers were not claiming benefits at all (10th September 2008).

It was interesting that only one statement relating to this theme was not about welfare fraud. In an article entitled ‘United Nations’ of claimants costing State EUR150m’ (5th August 2008) Labour deputy leader Joan Burton, said it was particularly troubling that young immigrants from Eastern European states were reliant on the rent supplement scheme due to unemployment, when that scheme could potentially become a poverty trap. "The critical thing is that you need to encourage people back to work because if they are bringing up children in rented accommodation and are barred from the workforce, it's not great for the kids". Deputy Burton’s statement demonstrates an understanding of the structural barriers which many individuals experience on a day to day basis. However, in this instance, the statement also reflects a neoliberal view of the welfare state, in that the rent supplement scheme is portrayed as assisting in the creation of ‘poverty traps’ and therefore possibly developing a culture of welfare dependency. Deputy Burton’s assertion that the "critical thing is that you need to encourage people back to work” reflects a variant of the ‘Social Integration Discourse’ (Levitas 2003), which sees paid labour as the only way for individuals of working age to be fully included in contemporary society. However this
perspective ignores the fact that entry to the labour market at (or sometimes below) minimum wage can no more address social exclusion than welfare payments can.

All of the statements examined in this section are very significant. Barret & McCarthy (2008, p.3) note that the comparatively minor amount of research literature on immigration and welfare is in conflict with the concerns that are expressed over the supposed excessive welfare claims by immigrants in public discourse. Yet growing hostility towards migrants is something that occurs during a recession, and politicians should be cogniscent that constructing immigrants as disproportionately involved in defrauding the social welfare system may have serious implications for the treatment of migrants in this country (O’Donoghue 2010).

**Marriages of convenience**

Cross national marriages are modern phenomena (Piper 1997, p.332; Cottrell 1990 cited in Chiyoko King-O’Riain 2009), and one of the lasting impacts of the Celtic Tiger boom is an increase in intimate relationships involving Irish and non-Irish citizens. Yet the Irish state legitimates and de-legitimates various relationships (Toyota 2008 cited in Chiyoko King-O’Riain 2010, p.7), while categorising others as sham marriages. While

“there is no offence on the statute books relating to participation in a marriage of convenience, subsection (1) of section 138 of the Immigration, Residence & Protection Bill 2010 allows the Minister, in making his or her determination of any immigration matter, to disregard a particular marriage as a factor bearing on that determination, where he or she deems or determines that marriage to be a marriage of convenience. Subsection (20) of section 138, imposes a requirement on the Minister to notify the parties concerned where he or she has reasonable grounds for considering that the marriage is a marriage of convenience. Subsection (4) provides that the fact that a marriage has been considered in the context of a previous immigration matter does not prevent it being opened to scrutiny again”.

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6 Data provided by the Department of Justice and Law Reform in response to a request for same
Ireland had been deporting the non-EU spouses of EU citizens residing in Ireland until 2007 when the European Court of Justice ruled that the process was illegal (Chiyoko King-O’Riain 2010, p.9). Chiyoko King-O’Riain (2010, p.9) argues that as a consequence the Irish state increased its attention to the deportation of the non-EU spouses of Irish citizens, as the legitimacy of such marriages remains at the discretion of the Minister for Justice.

In response to a request to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform for information, we were advised that it was

“not possible to provide definitive statistics on the number of bogus marriages / marriages of convenience, but that information available suggests that there are significant numbers of cases where such an inference can be drawn … Regarding applications for residence on foot of marriage to a Union citizen it is estimated that approximately 30% of those cases involved persons who were illegally present in Ireland or on a temporary or limited permissions thereby giving rise to a suspicion that the marriage is one of convenience for the purpose of circumventing immigration controls. Further indicators of a problem are to be found in highly unusual patterns of marriages and intelligence in relation to inducements being offered in certain European Union Member States for their nationals to marry third country nationals”.

Proving that a marriage is one of convenience is extremely problematic, as is illustrated by a recent judicial review of an objection lodged by an Garda Síochána to the marriage of a Limerick-based couple of Pakistani and Latvian nationality. In stating their case, senior counsel for the couple noted that “…an objection can only be lodged in respect of a marriage on the grounds that an impediment exists” (Limerick Leader 2010). Impediments include being under the age of 18, of the same sex, married, defined as lacking the competence to enter a marriage contract or a tie of kinship defined by the Irish state as precluding marriage (General Register Office 2010). Counsel argued that in the absence of such impediments, an objection amounted to “unlawful interference in their right to marry” (Limerick Leader 2010).

In the absence of any offence relating specifically to entering a marriage of convenience, preventing the participants in such marriages from acquiring EU Treaty Rights has been the route taken in many cases. In this regard, if the Garda National
Immigration Bureau discovers information which leads to a suspicion that a marriage is one of convenience, the information is provided to the EU Treaty Rights section at the Irish Naturalisation & Immigration Service, where it is taken into consideration in deciding to accept or reject an application for EU Treaty Rights based on marriage.

In November 2009, the Garda National Immigration Bureau launched *Operation Charity* to prevent marriages of convenience from taking place and, where they had taken place, to prevent participants in such marriages from being granted EU Treaty Rights based on marriage to an EEA national. In the course of this operation the Garda National Immigration Bureau utilised the provision at section 58 (1) of the Civil Registration Act 2004, by lodging an objection to the intended solemnisation of a marriage where it is suspected that the marriage is one of convenience. To date, approximately sixty such objections have been lodged with relevant registrars of marriage. In approximately ten such cases, the marriage did not take place and the foreign-national concerned has been removed from the State by deportation or removal order. In other cases suspects have been arrested with regard to such offences as bigamy, possession and use of bogus documents, provision of false information etc. Yet the politicisation of the number of ‘bogus marriages of convenience’ has arguably been accompanied by the construction of a ‘moral panic’ which has targeted / profiled certain groups (e.g. Eastern European Women and Pakistani men) as being more likely to engage in 'bogus' unions than others.

In examining the sample we found three articles (all from the Irish Independent) containing relevant statements from politicians concerning marriages of convenience. Those speaking in this context included Fine Gael’s Denis Naughten TD and Fianna Fáil’s Minister for Justice Dermot Ahern. Minister Ahern said he was "effectively banned from raising Ireland's concerns in relation to recent changes with regard to immigration, particularly the pressing issue of bogus marriages of convenience" at an EU Council meeting (25th September 2008). He argued that marriage patterns relating to particular nationalities could not have occurred by chance. Furthermore Mr Ahern told a meeting of EU Justice and Home Affairs ministers: "It is clear that this sort of safety net will lead to increased abuse of the directive and undermines the work being

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7 Data provided by the Department of Justice and Law Reform in response to a request for same
8 Data provided by the Department of Justice and Law Reform in response to a request for same
done in respect of combating illegal migration" (25th September 2008). Minister Ahern’s statements’ connecting ‘marriage of convenience’ and illegal immigration imply a threat to the state. His accusation that marriages between certain nationalities could not have occurred by chance is also problematic as it could have served to stigmatise all marriages between such nationalities in the public mind.

Denis Naughten argued that the proposals in the Immigration and Residence Bill to address such ‘bogus weddings’ would impose an unfair burden on priests. "Priests are going to become immigration officers and it puts a huge onus on them to ensure that this documentation is genuine" (4th February 2008). He also asserted that requirements to pass on information to the authorities would impact on the trust between priest and parishioner. Mr Naughton highlighted that the requirement will apply to marriage involving all non-Irish citizens. "If you wanted to marry someone who was a UK citizen or American citizen, she will have to apply for permission three months in advance and the minister can refuse it." (4th February 2008) In essence, Deputy Naughten would seem to support Chiyoko King-O’Riain’s (2010, p.12) assertion that the Irish state is “reaching into the most private parts of many couples lives” and deciding “who can and can’t love” and / or legitimately marry.

Education

If migrants are to integrate into Irish society then they must have the same access to education and employment as Irish citizens, yet this group face continuing barriers to their participation in education. The changed economic circumstances bring this issue into “even sharper focus” (Delaney cited in Linehan and Hogan 2008, p.1).

There are a number of issues pertinent to migrants and education of which the most significant is English language ability. This has been identified as a major reason why transnational migrants earn less than the Irish. However cuts made in recent budgets will see fewer English language resource teachers available in the education system. Secondly there is a need to have in place a suitable system for the recognition of foreign qualifications. To that end, a national system has been established by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland which will help highly qualified migrants work in jobs appropriate to their skills, thereby reducing the risks of an oversupply of migrant workers in the market for low-skilled labour (FÁS 2006, p.7).
In examining the sample we found 15 articles (14 appeared in the Irish Independent and 1 appeared in the Limerick Leader) containing relevant statements, which had a focus on education. Statements from politicians concerning EU migrants on this theme came from the three main political parties, Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and Labour. Those speaking in this context included Labour's Finance spokesman Joan Burton TD, and their Education spokesperson Ruairi Quinn TD, (Fine Gael Spokesperson on Education and Science, September 2007 - July 2010), then Immigration spokesperson Denis Naughten TD, and Fine Gael Senator Fidelma Healy-Eames, Fianna Fáil’s Mary Hanafin (Minister for Education and Science 2004-2008), Batt O’Keeffe (Minister for Education and Science 2008-2010), and Chris Andrews TD (Fianna Fáil).

Most of the statements on this theme related to Brian Hayes’ call for the segregation of immigrant children in secondary schools, until they learn to speak English to a certain standard (21st August 2008). In the same article Fine Gael Senator Fidelma Healy-Eames called for the mandatory "language testing" of people seeking to enter the country as immigrants who lack English-language skills are a drain on the public services. A backlash (led by an academic in DCU and the New Communities Partnership), emerged which branded the proposal as racist. However Mr Hayes argued that his proposal was suggested in the best interests of immigrant children. In an article entitled ‘Teachers back call to segregate immigrants’ (19th August 2008) Brian Hayes said his proposals emanated from his concern for migrant children who were being "left behind" in their preparations for state exams. "They need proper English language training but my view is at the moment, that's not happening. I know my views are controversial, but the bottom line is that I have only the interest of the new Irish at heart". He asserts that parents of English-speaking children were also disturbed by the impact of integrated classes upon their children.

Mr Hayes stated "This is a serious issue that has been raised by teachers and it has to be taken seriously…. He argued that immigrant children were being "left behind" at Junior and Leaving Certificate level under the current system of fewer than four hours of English language teaching per week” (20th August 2008). Mr Hayes also argued that "we have to look at making sure these international kids are getting what they need. One or two hours of intensive English a week is nowhere near enough… They
need intensive English teaching before they should be introduced to the mainstream. Spending almost EUR10,000 a year on each of these—and still many of them are arriving in post-primary level with very limited English—is not acceptable. The new minister must now look at the system and ensure these children can speak English before entering the main stream" (23rd April 2009). Fianna Fáil Dublin South East TD Chris Andrews asserted that segregation was already a reality in Irish schools. He is cited as having proposed a quota system to rectify the situation (20th August 2008).

While his choice of the word ‘segregation’ was unfortunate, Brian Hayes’s proposal though controversial was not without any pedagogically-informed precedent. For instance, research has demonstrated the positive effect of Direct Instruction on student achievement, which was evident in improving overall standards as well as the students’ abilities in language, reading, mathematics, spelling, health and science. It also produced a positive effect on affective behaviours and social skills (see Greer et al. 2004 for a full discussion). However, Mr Hayes’ proposals were not subjected to an informed debate. Accusations of racism (though this time not made by politicians) again served to stifle what might have been an interesting and very important discussion around pedagogical practices in Ireland. Senator Healy-Eames comments should be differentiated from those of Mr Hayes as they propose a restrictive immigration policy based on English language ability (this is further discussed in the section on political, social and cultural integration).

The second issue emerging in relation to education was a desire to tackle existing barriers for migrant children within the education system. In three separate articles (27th March 2008; 3rd May 2008; 2nd May 2008) the then Minister for Education Mary Hanafin spoke of having to "ensure that all schools are open to students of all backgrounds. To that end there are a number of policy options that now need to be considered with a view to promoting inclusion" (27th March 2008). She also asserted that she planned to better inform parents of their rights if their child is refused access to a school, and the possibility of banning the practice of reserving places for children of past pupils and siblings, and taking names of children at birth, as this made it particularly difficult for migrant children to secure school places. While the Minister’s comments are to be welcomed there has emerged a significant difference in terms of
the implementation of state policy in this regard when compared to her aspirations as stated in 2008.

The final issue emerging in relation to education was the call for continued (adequate) funding of English language classes for migrant children. Labour finance spokesperson Joan Burton, spoke of dire consequence for areas like Dublin West, if language classes were reduced. “Cutting back on language support is a very short-sighted decision. We all know that money is tight, but giving more flexibility might have a better outcome for everyone. Just as the Government was very bad in planning for school provision for these children, now that they are in the schools, they are failing them again” (25th April 2009; see also her comments in a related article published on 25th April 2009). These sentiments were also expressed by Fine Gael immigration spokesman Denis Naughten (4th October 2008). However, in contrast to these views, then Minister for Education Batt O’Keefe claimed that additional teachers, in excess of those provided to deal with the language needs of newcomer children or those with special needs, were provided in each of the past two years (1st July 2008). The Minister subsequently stated in April 2009 that “… the number of EAL teachers in a school would be capped at two, regardless of the number of overseas pupils enrolled... [but] that he was prepared to make exceptions in schools which have a high proportion of newcomer children” (Limerick Leader 24th April 2009).

While the Ministers’ comments reflect the reality of diminishing economic resources at this time, they can also be argued to underestimate the importance of English language support for immigrant children. In that context, it was interesting to find that Labour education spokesperson Ruairi Quinn proposed that "reallocating 1pc of the development aid budget would make a huge difference to newcomers, who needed English language support and more so that they can function effectively…If we can facilitate their total integration into the economy and our society, it's a win-win situation" (14th March 2008). While Mr Quinn’s’ proposal was not realised and may be considered controversial, it reflects an understanding that despite a situation where economic resources were continually diminishing, the need to fund English language support classes for migrants remained of paramount importance. It can be argued that,
his comments demonstrate his (and, as spokesperson, his Party’s) commitment to exploring other avenues so as to obtain the appropriate funding for this service.

**Road safety**

Our sample includes statements by national politicians regarding proposed linkages between migrants and road safety - Fianna Fáil leader of the Seanad, Donie Cassidy, Fine Gael’s Deputy Spokesperson on Transport with Special Responsibility for Road Safety, Shane McEntee, and their then Transport and Marine spokesperson Fergus O'Dowd. These statements all appear in articles published in the Irish Independent in February 2008. The Migrant Rights Centre acknowledges the existence of discourses which suggest a correlation between road traffic offences and the presence of migrants in Ireland, but counter that the Gardaí have publicly stated that such a link does not exist. Rather, they argue that perceptions of such a relationship are likely the result of the increasing diversification of Ireland’s population which is necessarily reflected in the profile of those involved in road traffic accidents (Migrant Rights Centre Ireland & National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism 2007).

On February 7th 2008, Fine Gael's transport spokesperson Fergus O'Dowd was quoted in response to statements by Gay Byrne, the chairperson of the Road Safety authority, in which he associates ‘non-Irish nationals’ with a “huge culture of drink driving and speed”. Deputy Fergus O'Dowd responded, agreeing with Mr. Byrnes’ condemnation of drinking while driving, as well as the former’s point, that at the time the proportion of immigrant drivers involved in accidents was proportionate to their percentage of the national population. He added that while:

“… there was nothing to support the theory that foreign drivers were more accident prone, they were almost three times more likely to be driving uninsured. Some 15pc of foreign-registered cars were estimated to be uninsured, compared to just 6pc of Irish cars, he pointed out.” (Fergus O’Dowd in the Irish Independent, February 7th 2008)

The figures quoted by Mr. O’ Dowd are accurate; however, it is crucial to note that they are averages and when we break down the figures for foreign registered cars we find some interesting variations. Those driving on Western European licence plates are largely insured, while the uninsured rates for those driving on Eastern European
plates had been running at approximately 15% in the years of relevance to this study (this has fallen considerably, particularly among Polish and Lithuanian registered vehicles, and the rate is now comparable to that of Irish registered cars at approximately 6%). Among foreign registered cars, one of the groups most likely to be uninsured were those individuals driving on Northern Irish licence plates, with levels of uninsured drivers in this category having been found to be running at approximately 15%. Many of those driving on Northern Irish plates are Irish Nationals; additionally many of those driving on Irish plates will be foreign nationals.9

It is also notable that in his response Mr. O’Dowd did not challenge the assertion that immigrant drivers are part of a “huge drink culture” nor the anecdotal basis for Mr. Byrne’s claims that immigrant drivers were drinking while in the process of driving. It is worth noting that Ireland as a country has one of the highest per capita levels of alcohol consumption and binge drinking events in the European Union (European Commission 2006).

On the 8th of February, the Irish Independent cite Senator Daniel ‘Donie’ Cassidy (Fianna Fáil) as addressing road safety issues, making specific reference to non-Irish nationals, comments which he made in his position as Leader of theSeanad. The Seanad debates record that on February 7th, Senator Cassidy began by making reference to a number of general issues regarding road safety, including legislative developments. He then proceeded to address the specific issue of non-Irish national drivers in response to a point raised by Senator Ellis (Fianna Fáil), who had stated that:

“We need to ensure many of the bangers brought into the country from Eastern Europe and which are being driven by eastern Europeans who, in many cases, have neither tax nor insurance, are taken off the road by the Garda. The Garda must up the ante on the vehicles many of these people drive. In some areas it is being done and I hope it becomes nationwide. It is one way of dealing with the situation. In last weekend’s road accidents the non-national involvement was very high and in all cases they were in the wrong. We also have a problem with road manners and we see it every day. People are not living within the

9 Data received from Motor Insurance Information Centre of Ireland on September 3rd, 2010 in response to a request for same.
rules of the road on many occasions.” (Senator John Ellis Seanad debate, February 7th 2008, Volume 188, Order of Business).

In his response to Senator Ellis, Senator Cassidy stated that:

“Senator Ellis, who has a great deal of experience in this area because it was his undertaking during the lifetime of the previous Dáil, raised the issue of ten to 15 year old cars being brought into this country and allowed on the road. One can see such sales in Mullingar on Monday nights and throughout the country, where those from other destinations who have come to this country to work avail of them, just as our Irish colleagues did in America and elsewhere in the 1950s and 1960s when they were trying to get a start in life. People coming to Ireland from a country which drives on the opposite side of the road should be obliged to adhere to a 50 mile an hour speed limit when using our roads.”

He also suggested that Ireland switch to driving on the right hand side of the road, citing the existence of many reasons for researching such a proposal, including the use of right hand drive in countries from which significant proportions of Ireland’s tourists emanate.

It is worth noting that the issue of immigrant drivers was initially raised in the Seanad debate of February 7th by Senator Frances Fitzgerald (Fine Gael) who, highlighting the importance of avoiding stereotypes, asked the Leader to:

“… ask the Minister for Transport about the number of foreign drivers on our roads … The Government has not taken steps to ensure that road signs are made available in languages other than English, which would be a practical thing to do. Such signs would be of assistance when people from other countries are driving from Dublin Airport to the M50, for example. It is difficult enough for any of us to negotiate the M50. This is a real issue. The recently updated road safety booklet was published in English only. Such matters need to be examined. I am sure specific initiatives could be taken to assist international drivers who come to Ireland and, possibly, make it less likely that they are involved in accidents.” (Seanad debate, February 7th 2008, Volume 188, Order of Business).

Senator Paul Coghlan (Fine Gael) and Senator Camillus Glynn (Fianna Fáil) also specifically addressed immigrant drivers:
“Sadly, some among the increasing number of foreign drivers on our roads may have defective vehicles. I agree with Senator Ellis’s proposal for the Garda to be given the power to remove defective vehicles from the road. We should not allow someone from this or any other state on our roads if he or she has not been tested. Given the increasing volume of traffic, allowing people who are unused to driving on the left side of the road to drive without being tested will put more lives at risk.” (Senator Paul Coughlan)

“I will touch on two issues raised by previous speakers. In respect of road safety, it is time we desisted from the ostrich syndrome of burying our heads in the sand. The numbers and ratio of accidents involving non-nationals are of great concern. There is no point in fooling ourselves.” (Senator Camillus Glynn)

Other senators contributed to this debate without making specific reference to foreign nationals, focusing instead on general measures to improve road safety. Comments made during the debate indicate that the Seanad discussion was prompted at least in part by statements, critical of the government’s record on road safety, made by Gay Byrne, Chairman of the Road Safety Authority, in the Irish Independent on the 7th of February.

Finally, on February 18th, T.D. Shane McEntee (Fianna Gael Deputy Spokesperson on Transport with special responsibility for Road Safety) is cited responding to a delay in the availability of translations of the Rules of the Road booklet. He was quoted as stating that “In relation to foreign drivers, the Road Safety Authority is doing a good job, the only way is to educate”, welcoming the publication of the translations and seeking their dissemination in locations such as “Polish food shops”. The newspaper also attributes to Mr. McEntee a proposal to create off-road driving schools to aid drivers new to the roads and to Irish roads specifically, as well as the availability of road signs in other language.

The comments above reflect a variety of approaches to the issue of road safety with specific regard to foreign nationals. On the one hand, some of the politicians’ comments clearly concentrate on constructive recommendations for positive actions to accommodate immigrant drivers, for example by means of recognising linguistic diversity. Others propose punitive actions which advocate the differential treatment of immigrant drivers, for example a reduced speed limit for all drivers who do not have Irish citizenship or an additional driving test. Such proposals are, notably, not
accompanied by a discussion of the consequences that these initiatives might have for the treatment of Irish drivers in other countries. A third category of comments serve to characterise transnational migrant drivers as a particular threat to road safety. Of concern is the frequency with which these characterisations are unsupported by reference to authoritative sources of evidence and the failure to require an evidentiary basis for characterisations put forward by others. The requirement for an evidentiary basis for policy, legislation and related proposals from our politicians is key to ensuring that we avoid moral panics and initiatives which seek to differentially regulate particular groups within our population without reasoned justification.

**Crime (including trafficking)**

During the period of this research, we found 6 articles, all appearing in the Irish Independent, in which politicians had made public statements relating to crimes pertaining to non-Irish nationals. The politicians making statements concerning EU migrants and crime included Independent Councillor Willie Burke, Fianna Fáil’s Bertie Ahern, Justice Minister Dermot Ahern, & Councillor Connie Ni Fhatharta, and Fine Gael's Immigration spokesperson Denis Naughten and Justice spokesperson, Charles Flanagan. The statements made about crime can be divided into two categories – those relating to policy issues and responses to the victimisation of individual non-Irish nationals.

Although the association of crime and immigration is firmly embedded in popular discourse (Haynes, Devereux and Breen 2006), there is little empirical evidence to support this association (see Collins 2005; Wadsworth 2010; Tomaševski 1997). The majority of imprisoned immigrants are held in relation to immigration-related issues specifically (Migrant Rights Centre and National Consultative Committee on Interculturalism and Racism 2007), and O’Donnell (2004) notes that explanations for the rates of imprisonment of minorities internationally, must include consideration not only of involvement in crime, but also of profiling by the police service as well as the potential for less favourable treatment by the remainder of the criminal justice system. Nonetheless the links between immigration and crime have become a particular focus of government policy, particularly with regard to the securing of borders and the internationalisation of crime (Kline 2004).
In an article dated January 23rd 2008, Charles Flanagan, Fine Gael justice spokesperson, is quoted as commenting on State policy with regard to the immigration of EU nationals who have a criminal record:

“Fine Gael justice spokesperson, Charles Flanagan, last night said that the idea for an outright ban on criminals entering the country was a "non-runner"… But he said member states should be provided with more information relating to citizens who have committed serious offences.” (Irish Independent 23rd January 2008)

His statement is cited in relation to the sentencing of a Czech national with previous convictions, who was found guilty of the murder of an Irish national in this State. The victim’s sister was quoted as saying:

"We are devastated and disgusted he was allowed into this country”.

"She would be alive if that man had been stopped coming into Ireland”. (Irish Independent 23rd January 2008)

Deputy Flanagan’s comments regarding the impracticality of a ban on criminals entering the country mirror those of a Department of Justice Spokesperson and reflect the implications of the EU legislation regarding the freedom of movement, as well as a concern with security.

In an article dated February 16th, 2009, Fine Gael's immigration spokesman Denis Naughten is cited as criticizing the deportation of people who may be victims of human trafficking without proffering them the opportunity to avail of a 60 day period of reflection and recovery first established on 7th June 2008 (Department of Justice and Law Reform 2010). Criticizing the reportedly low numbers of potential victims given access to this provision, but adopting a focus on security rather than humanitarian issues, Deputy Naughten is quoted as saying that:

"It is vitally important that every possible step is taken to support the suspected victim to ensure that we get successful prosecutions.”

Again discussing the subject of human trafficking, Deputy Naughten is cited, along
with Minister for Justice Dermot Ahern (Fianna Fáil), in an article published on the 3rd of December 2009. The elected representatives are indirectly quoted as “welcoming” the conviction of three Romanian nationals for human trafficking and having “…congratulated the gardai” (Irish Independent, December 3rd 2009). The three EU nationals were convicted in Romania following a joint investigation between Gardaí and the Romanian authorities into the trafficking of Romanian nationals into Ireland. Minister Ahern is also indirectly quoted as stating that “… the aim was to make Ireland a hostile environment for those responsible for such crimes”. (Irish Independent 3rd December 2009). As in the statement cited in the previous article, the focus of the commentary is very much on security. This approach could be argued to be illustrative of a broader process of the securitisation of immigration policy across Europe, which has been the focus of much critical authorship in recent years, given that the overwhelming dominance of concerns with security (and economic impact) is held to be at odds with humanitarian interests (see for example Buonfino, 2004). In this instance, security concerns are prioritised over reference to the experiences and needs of victims of human trafficking and the State’s responsibility to these victims, which the case also highlights.

Responses to crimes victimising individual transnational migrants were recorded from County Councillor Willie Burke (Independent member of Galway County Council), Connie Ni Fhatharta (Fianna Fáil Councillor, Connemara to June 2009) and former Taoiseach (to May 2008) Bertie Ahern. In each instance the victims in question were EU nationals and in each case the individuals had been murdered. The Councillors each responded to crimes occurring in their local area:

“Local county councillor Willie Burke said the events had caused great shock and upset in the Portumna area. "Most people did not even know of it until we heard at Mass that a man had been killed. This is a very quiet place and nothing like this has ever happened in Portumna before." "It is a very isolated incident and while there are a few hundred non-nationals living here there have been no problems and there has been very good integration”” (Irish Independent 4th February 2008).

””We can't believe it -- it's terrible. We lost a member of our community on Saturday night [referring to the death of a local woman in a road traffic accident] and people are still shocked at that. Now we have this. Although this is the most populated part of the
Connemara Gaeltacht -- it is still very rural. We don't really have a lot of non-nationals here because there is a language barrier. Our school and church and everything is done through Irish". (Connie Ni Fhatharta, Irish Independent 22nd July 2008).

Then Taoiseach Bertie Ahern is cited in an article published on February 29th 2008, as offering his sympathies for the deaths of two Polish nationals to the Prime Minister of Poland and the victims’ families while on a State visit to that country. The two men were murdered by Irish nationals while living in Ireland. While condemnatory of the perpetrators actions Mr. Ahern emphasised that the murders were not ethnically motivated. Mr. Ahern also commented on the impact on the local community:

"It was just hooliganism at its worst, and obviously it has shocked the community where they were living. It is very sad and upsetting for everybody." (Then Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, Irish Independent 29th February 2008).

All three politicians act as spokespersons for the local communities in which the victims resided, asserting the significance of the EU nationals’ deaths for their Irish neighbours. At least two of the politicians also seem at pains to deflect any implications that racism played any part in the non-Irish nationals’ victimisation. While there is no reason to question the veracity of these assertions in relation to these two cases, Gardai statistics (which are considered to underestimate the levels of racially motivated crime due to underreporting) document the reporting of 180 cases of racially motivated crime in 2008 (Migrant Rights Centre 2010).

At a national policy level, the relationship between security and immigration should be considered not only with reference to the integrity of our borders and the safety of the citizenry within, but also with regard to the particular vulnerabilities experienced by immigrants living within our borders.

Racism & discrimination (including the exploitation of migrant workers)

It is crucial that strong regulations are in place to ensure that employers comply with labour legislation so as to avoid the exploitation of workers (FÁS 2006, p.7). In an Irish context, the key pieces of equality legislation are the Employment Equality Acts, 1998 and 2004 and the Equal Status Acts, 2000 and 2004. These Acts proscribe discrimination in employment, vocational training, advertising, collective agreements,
the provision of goods and services etc. on nine distinct grounds: gender; marital status; family status; age; disability; race; sexual orientation; religious belief; and membership of the Traveller Community. Additionally, the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989 prohibits any action which represents an incitement to hatred, hostility or violence against people in the State on account of their race, colour, nationality, religion ethnic or national origin, membership of the Travelling Community or sexual orientation. However, there have been few prosecutions under this Act. The Migrant Integration Policy Index ranks Ireland 13th out of 28 states in regards to anti-discrimination policy and notes in particular that the high evidential standards required by the Incitement to Hatred Act have a significantly detrimental impact on its efficacy (Niessen, Huddleston and Citron. 2007, p. 96).

It is worth noting that in a comparative report, the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency found that:

“...Ireland was among the top five countries in the EU when it came to racial discrimination and abuse” (Migrant Rights Centre 2010).

It is argued that support for action on diversity, interculturalism and integration whilst vitally important will not produce affirmative consequences without equal weight being given to challenging and countering racism (O’Donoghue 2010).

Political will is key to the establishment and sustainability of any policy initiative, including those which tackle racism. Yet during the period to which this study relates the Fianna Fáil led government withdrew funding from the only official structure in Ireland with an exclusive focus on racism - the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism; the National Action Plan against Racism ended and Anti-Racism in the Workplace Week was rebranded as Workplace Diversity Week, undermining the credibility of the government’s commitment to addressing racism in Irish society. Beyond support for any particular anti-racist initiative, the manner in which politicians frame immigration and immigrants in their public statements has an important role to play in influencing public attitudes towards this group. Fanning and
Mutwarasibo (2007) cite former Senator Minihan’s assertion that racial tensions in Cork rose following comments regarding asylum seekers made by Fianna Fáil candidate Noel O’Flynn in his campaign for the 2002 election (see Garner 2007 for a wider discussion of anti-immigrant tensions in the run up to the 2002 elections). Influential public figures’ support for or condemnation of anti-immigrant sentiments have a particularly important role to play in shaping public understanding during periods of recession, which can be accompanied by growing hostility towards migrants and tendencies to scapegoat migrants for the economic hardships experienced by the citizenry. Indeed, the FRA - European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2010, p.19) asserts that increased hostility towards immigrants, linked to the onset of recession, was a European wide phenomenon during the time period of this study:

“From 2008, however, the European economy entered the sharpest economic crisis experienced since the 1930s. In several countries instances of xenophobic discourse and hostilities towards third country nationals re-surfaced against the background of job losses of the EU citizens.”

Research indicates that public perception of resource competition promotes negative attitudes towards immigrants (Semyonov et al 2008; Coenders et al 2005), while J.J. Lee asserts that the Irish have historically tended precisely towards such perceptions, viewing economic prosperity in particular as a ‘zero sum’ game, in which others’ betterment necessarily equates to the worsening of one’s own fortunes and vice versa (Lee 1989).

In such contexts, the role played by our political leaders (and the media) is of paramount importance, particularly in the context that these groups have the power to define our social world and subsequently “impose a framework within which migrants are perceived” (O’Donoghue 2010). Relating to the time period of this study, in the lead up to the Irish vote on the Lisbon Treaty in June 2008, anti-migrant and racist propaganda was “particularly evident” in “the tabloid media and some right wing anti-Lisbon Treaty groups”. Additionally the recent discourse on migrant workers

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10 Although Esses et al (2001, p.394) clarify that the resources in question need not be exclusively economic and that perceived competition for social, cultural and political privilege are also factors in negative attitudes towards immigrants.
defrauding the Irish social welfare system has “significant potential to exacerbate racism” (Migrant Rights Centre Ireland 2010).

In examining the sample we found that 7 articles contained relevant statements focusing on racism and discrimination, all published in the Irish Independent. Statements concerning EU migrants on this theme were made by individuals from across the political spectrum including President Mary McAleese, Fine Gael Immigration spokesperson Denis Naughten, Fianna Fáil’s Junior Minister for Labour Affairs Dara Calleary, Integration Minister Conor Lenihan, then chairman of Louth County Council Councillor Jimmy Mulroy, and then Dublin Lord Mayor Eibhlin Byrne, Sinn Fein’s Councillor Kevin Meenan, MEP Joe Higgins and Councillor Clare Daly (both of the Socialist Party), and Labour's Joe Costello (Spokesperson on European Affairs and Human Rights 2007–2010).

Although our sample is bereft of statements regarding other forms of discrimination experienced by EU nationals living in Ireland during the time period to which this study relates (including in relation to access to public services), a number of politicians are recorded as publicly highlighting discrimination against EU nationals with regards to pay.

In August 2009, Fine Gael’s immigration spokesperson Denis Naughten was named in an article criticizing a shortfall in the number of National Employment Rights Authority (NERA) inspectors. Deputy Naughten is cited as highlighting the exploitation of transnational migrant workers and is quoted publicly critiquing the government’s enforcement of labour law in this regard:

‘Fine Gael immigration spokesman Denis Naughten said cowboy companies were breaking the law by paying less than the agreed minimum wage rates to migrant workers in particular. "The Government is refusing to enforce the law and both Irish workers and migrant workers are paying the price," he said. Mr Naughten pointed to examples in the construction industry where Irish workers were let go and replaced by migrant workers at much lower rates. "Some have hit national prominence such as the treatment of Gama construction workers from Turkey and the Polish workers at the ESB station in Moneypoint, Co Clare," he said. … Mr Naughten said it was time for companies who exploited workers to be "weeded out". "The only way that this can be effectively eradicated
is by putting in place a stringent inspection system,” he said.’ (Irish Independent 24th August 2009)

In the same article Junior Minister for Labour Affairs Dara Calleary is cited as defending the adequacy of the governments’ response to the exploitation of workers and placing the responsibility on individuals to report cases of exploitation:

“Junior Minister for Labour Affairs Dara Calleary called on people to complain to NERA if they were aware of cases where migrant workers were being exploited. "I'm happy there is enough protection in place. We have inspectors who have a key knowledge of the migrant sector, so we are responding to the challenge.” (Irish Independent 24th August 2009).

The statements of both representatives highlight the need to address exploitation of migrant workers, although they evaluate the efficacy of the government’s record in this regard very differently. The comments attributed to Junior Minister Calleary reflect a process of individuating responsibility which Gilbert (2002) associates with a broader rolling back of the State. It is important to recognise that provisions to protect the vulnerable, which depend on individuals reporting discrimination, are limited by the power differentials between the individual and the person or organisation against whom they wish to make a complaint. Particularly in the case of exploited migrant workers, it may be very difficult for them to submit a complaint, given fears of the loss of employment (see Primetime Investigates 2008). The Migrant Integration Policy Index acknowledges the importance of Ireland’s Equality Authority’s remit with regards to instigating investigations of discriminatory practises and providing legal advice to victims, but criticises the State’s policy of denying aid to individuals taking equality-related cases (Niessen, Huddleston and Citron 2007, p. 96).

The Migrant Integration Policy Index criticises the Irish State for off-loading its responsibilities in leading public discourse regarding anti-discrimination onto the (increasingly poorly resourced) Equality Authority (Niessen, Huddleston and Citron 2007, p. 96). The comments attributed to Deputy Naughten highlight the significant role that opposition politicians can (but in this sample infrequently do) play in stimulating public awareness of issues impacting immigrant workers and, perhaps more significantly, in providing a critical voice regarding the State’s response to the needs of immigrants, although the content of the comments are also reflective of
Smith’s (2008, p.415) assertion that “Fine Gael has primarily criticised the way the government implements its policies rather than showing any fundamental difference over substance”.

An article dating from February 19th 2008 provides a starkly contrasting illustration of the use to which politicians may put their public platform. In an article entitled ‘FF councillor is branded absurd over call to pay foreigners less’, then Chairman of Louth County Council (2007-2008), Councillor Jimmy Mulroy, is cited as advocating differential pay for migrant workers in response to a motion by Sinn Fein Councillor Jim Loughran that the government should include the principle of equal treatment in any legislation relating to agency workers:

‘In a debate on the abuse of workers by some employment agencies, he said that while Irish people, "need 12.50 an hour, people from Lithuania are doing very well on 8.50 an hour." … Speaking after the council meeting, Cllr Mulroy defended his remarks, arguing that many migrant workers were "very happy with 10 an hour", which could be equivalent to a month's wages in their home country. While acknowledging that his remarks would probably "hit the headlines", the councillor -- who runs an electrical contracting business -- stood by the remarks.’ (Irish Independent 19th February 2008)

The article records that the Councillor’s political party disassociated itself from his remarks. As well as referring to Councillor Loughran’s proposal, which highlights both the exploitation of agency workers and the government’s responsibility in regard to same, the article also records that during the debate Cllr Kevin Meenan (Sinn Fein) challenged the framework of understanding proffered by Councillor Mulroy stating that immigrant workers:

11 The complete text of the motion: “This Council notes the increase in agency employment throughout the economy; We are aware that many workers from home and abroad are offered agency employment when they are seeking direct and permanent employment. We understand trade unions have raised concerns that many of these workers are retained on minimum conditions and in some instances are not receiving all their entitlements. Agency employment should not be used as an unnecessary substitute for direct employment or as a mechanism for avoidance of, or undermining of fair pay and conditions. Noting that legislation will come before the Oireachtas on the issue of Agency Employment, this Council believes and will recommend to the Minister, that the principle of equal treatment should be included in any such legislation on this issue”. (Minute No. 31/08, Minutes of Council Meeting of Louth County Council held in County Hall, Dundalk on Monday 18th February, 2008. http://www.louthcoco.ie/en/Louth_County_Council/Minutes_of_Statutory_Meetings/2008/Council-Meeting-Minutes-February-2008.doc)
“do not fly home at night. If they live and work here they should get the same money (as Irish workers)”' (Irish Independent 19th February 2008)

The minutes of the Council meeting, which do not record Councillor Meenan’s remarks, do note that Councillor Loughran’s motion was seconded by Councillor D. Breathnach and agreed by the members (Minute No. 31/08, Minutes of Council Meeting of Louth County Council held in County Hall, Dundalk on Monday 18th February, 2008).

A third article, dating from the 8th of September 2009 and relating to the Lisbon Treaty Referendum (2) debate further illustrates that divergent frameworks of understanding regarding migrant workers may be deployed in service of a wider ideological arguments. In an article entitled ‘Punish State with 'No' vote, Higgins urges’, Socialist Party MEP for Dublin Joe Higgins is quoted as stating that:

‘“To ratify Lisbon would copperfasten the right of business to exploit migrant workers and enforce wages and conditions a way inferior to accepted norms in particular member states of the European Union. "This happens because the Lisbon Treaty institutionalises the rulings of the European Court of Justice, which endorsed the actions of foreign contractors in importing workers from one member state to another and seriously breaching the agreed rates of pay and various protections for such workers," Mr Higgins added.’ (Irish Independent 8th September 2009).

In the same article, Socialist Party Councillor for Swords Clare Daly is quoted as stating that:

‘… voting 'No' on October 2 would not "move things forward" but would "strongly refute the argument of the 'Yes' side that claims workers' rights would be protected"’ (Irish Independent 08th September 2009).

while Deputy Joe Costello (Labour, then Spokesperson for European Affairs and Human rights) is cited as having:

‘… rebutted minimum wage claims last night. He said the minimum wage in Ireland "is our own business" and a 'Yes' result would strengthen workers' rights and protect jobs.’ (Irish Independent 08th September 2009).
The Socialist Party representatives and Deputy Costello demonstrate that vigorous debates regarding appropriate frameworks of understanding do not require either side in the debate to adopt an anti-immigrant stance. However, this was not always the case in relation to the Lisbon Treaty debate and some stakeholders did seek to frame immigration as a threat to the Irish citizenry (Migrant Rights Centre 2010).

Four articles record statements problematising racism towards immigrants. In an article dating from the 8th of October 2008, then Minister for Integration Conor Lenihan is recorded as having highlighted the potential for recession to generate the scapegoating of migrants and challenged such tendencies by providing with an evidence-based counterargument regarding the relative position of immigrants in such an economic climate. He is cited as having:

‘… warned against projecting "phobias, worries or concerns" over the economic downturn onto vulnerable migrants who travelled to Ireland in search of work…. Research and figures suggest migrants are five times more likely to experience unemployment than Irish people, Mr Lenihan said.’

In an article dating from December 29th of the same year, Conor Lenihan reiterates this message and adds an assertion that a requirement for immigrant labour remains:

‘Integration Minister Conor Lenihan has warned of “tensions” between groups competing for jobs as unemployment soars. Mr Lenihan says confidential research suggests that an army of 100,000 migrants have left Ireland in the last 12 months with the collapse of the Celtic Tiger. The number is three times the official estimate of the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) that 35,000 immigrants have left Ireland over the last year. In a circular to TDs, Mr Lenihan said that nearly 140,000 fresh PPS numbers were issued to non-nationals in the first 10 months of the year now ending. "Given these latter figures, the integration of immigrants remains a significant challenge," the minister warned. Last night Mr Lenihan told the Irish Independent that numbers of cards issued did not mean that number were working or even within the country, since many people came 'on spec' and would leave on discovering that Ireland was a tougher labour market than expected. But he admitted the figures meant that Ireland was still an attractive venue, at least initially, and this meant a potential for tension between Irish and immigrant workers as the recession takes hold. "The PPS numbers indicate that there are still people coming, despite the downturn. Irish people haven't been competing for jobs in the hotels and hospitality sector, but now -- because of redundancies -- they are beginning to appear and seek work in less
skilled employment, such as retail counters or waiting on tables. They are competing. "There is potential for tension because people project their anger on to ethnic groups when they see their friends, uncles and aunts losing their jobs. You tend to have that pattern, by international evidence. It's not defined that it's going to happen in Ireland, but we have to guard against it." … Mr Lenihan said there was poor recording of those leaving the Irish market. Meanwhile, nearly one-fifth of those currently on the dole are non-nationals, according to Mr Lenihan, with 44,600 non-Irish on the Live Register here. But despite this harsher climate for migrants, they are continuing to arrive in Ireland in search of a better life. "We still have a need for immigrant labour, and it is here to stay," Mr Lenihan said. "It's not going to go away."

In the above statements, then Minister for Integration Conor Lenihan demonstrates the manner in which politicians can employ their public platform to positively inform public perceptions of the impact of immigration, challenge misinformation and promote alternative frameworks of understanding. It is worth noting that based on 453 interviews carried out in 2007-8 in the West, Mid-West and South of Ireland, Haynes, Devereux and Breen (2009, p.7-8) found that “considerable confusion and misinformation prevails about specific aspects of immigration”, including with respect to levels of immigration and the legal status of various groups including EU citizens.

In a related statement from March 17th 2009, Dublin Lord Mayor Eibhlin Byrne, speaking on St. Patrick’s Day, chose to use that opportunity to highlight the challenges to integration posed by the recession and the importance of overcoming the fears that may be generated by interpreting our economic well-being as a zero-sum game:

‘Dublin Lord Mayor Eibhlin Byrne said we need to rebuild our communities and our sense of solidarity in the face of the recession. She said some traditional communities are feeling threatened by growing multiculturalism and fear an economic threat of newcomers "taking jobs". Meanwhile many migrant communities have a real fear of growing racism. "We cannot afford to see communities divided by fear and tensions which may have economics at their root but which could certainly blossom into far more deadly threats to our society such as racism," she warned.’

The final article relates to a statement by President Mary McAleese in reference to racially motivated attacks in Northern Ireland. An article entitled ‘Attacks a return to bad old days’ cites a statement to RTE by President McAleese in which she uses her
Haynes, Power & Devereux   Doras Luimní

office to communicate the unacceptability of racism and sectarianism, highlighting the impact on victims:

‘President Mary McAleese yesterday described attacks on the Romanian immigrants as distressing and sickening. She said she had gone through the same kind of intimidation when she was growing up in Belfast and that old sectarian hatreds were now being replicated. She told RTE: "It's very distressing what's happening there and to realise as I did, having gone through the same thing, I know how sickening it is, how very vulnerable you feel, how you need friends, and how you need support."’ (June 24th 2009).

Despite the anti-racist stance adopted by many of the political figures cited in these articles, we would argue that their individual voices are too few to sustain an anti-racist agenda particularly in a period of recession. We would argue for the reinstitution of an anti-racist protocol by all political parties. Furthermore we would argue that the political leadership’s efforts to create an anti-racist national environment require the support of an adequately resourced institutional framework, such as that which has largely been dismantled over the previous two years, in order not only to effectively counter racist rhetoric but also to develop and disseminate alternative frameworks of understanding.

**Political, social and cultural integration**

At a state level Political, Social and Cultural integration falls under the remit of the Minister for Integration who has a cross departmental mandate to develop, drive and co-ordinate integration policy across other Government Departments, agencies and services (Office of the Minister of State for Integration, 2010). In addition to Government Departments and agencies, a range of non-governmental agencies, social partners, and other bodies are recognised as important stakeholders in the integration of immigrants.

Quinn (2010, p. 7) notes that Irish integration policy “…remains at a very early stage of development. Until 2007 the only official integration policy related to the recognition of refugees …”. She links these shortfalls to a widespread belief that immigration was a temporary phenomenon. In 2007, the establishment of the Office of the Minister for Integration evidenced progression in the area of integration. *The Migration Nation: Statement on Integration Strategy and Diversity Management*
document, launched in May 2008, sets out the government’s perspective on the key principles for successful integration. These principles include a partnership approach between Government and non-governmental organisations; linking integration policy to state-wide social inclusion measures; a clear focus in public policy to avoid the creation of segregated communities, and a commitment to align local delivery of services to migrants with those for indigenous communities (Office of the Minister of State for Integration, 2008). Nonetheless, Quinn (2010, p.7) asserts that “Developments arising from this policy statement have been limited to date and major new developments in the context of widespread budget cuts across the departments are unlikely for the foreseeable future”. Policy discourse concerning the integration of immigrants has tended to centre around serving national economic interests, while also strengthening border controls, internal rules, and safeguarding the unity of our Irish identity and culture (see National Economic and Social Council 2006: 109-121). Such policy discourse has co-existed, somewhat paradoxically, with more liberal discourse about the need for equality and cultural diversity (Watt 2006). As such, a representative of the state can “… without internal contradiction perceive his or her action towards an immigrant as both serving the national interest and fostering intercultural integration even if the immigrant perceives the action as discriminatory” (Boucher 2008, p.11).

Finally, while all Irish political parties express positive attitudes to the contribution of immigrants to Irish society (see Fanning et al. 2007, p.2), Fanning et al. (2007, p.3) suggest that behind their “rhetoric of inclusion and integration there may be little real commitment… to reaching out to immigrant communities unless there are votes to be won”. Currently only Irish & UK citizens can vote in general elections. There exists a danger of a large number of immigrant communities becoming politically marginalised in the future. (This issue is discussed further in the conclusion).

Our analysis identifies 10 relevant articles with a focus on social, cultural, and political integration, including statements from Labour Finance spokesperson Joan Burton, Labour’s Ruairi Quinn, Fianna Fáil’s Gaeltacht Minister Eamon O Cuiv, Education Minister Mary Hanafin & Councillor Katarzyna Gaborec, Fine Gael’s Education spokesperson Brian Hayes, Senator Fidelma Healy-Eames, PD Health
Minister Mary Harney, & Independent Portlaoise Town Councillor Rotimi Adebari. All of the articles appeared in the Irish Independent.

A number of the statements in these ten articles were concerned with the role that education has to play in the integration of migrants into Irish society. The statements from then Minister for Education Mary Hanafin about tackling the barriers for immigrant children that exist within the education system are discussed in the section on education in this report. Senator Healy-Eames argued that immigrants who wanted to work in the country should have to pass an English language test to improve the process of integration. "We really need to let foreign nationals know that English is a requirement to live here. It is absolutely ridiculous that some people are here for years without an English competency" (21st August 2008). In that context it is noteworthy that Joan Burton argued that:

“countries where children hadn't learned English are those that had been the least successful in terms of integration… However bad things will be at primary level, they are worse at post-primary, where “teachers are struggling to meet the needs of bilingual students in a context of limited training and resources” (25th April 2009).

While senator Healy-Eames statements depict English language ability as central to the process of integration, she proposes a restrictive policy of only allowing those who are proficient in the language to work in the country. In essence, this reflects a view that immigration policy should be altered to restrict immigration to only those who can assimilate linguistically without additional support from the State. Joan Burton frames the issue quite differently focusing on the need to support incoming migrants rather than to impose linguistic-based restrictions on immigration. Her statements reflect an understanding that integration is linked to English language ability and she expresses an awareness of the impact that reduced funding will have on the integration of migrants. Her comments could be read as highlighting the difference between the practice of state policy and the aspirations of the ‘Migration Nation’ document, which proposed a partnership approach to ensure that integration policy avoids the creation of segregated communities (Office of the Minister of State for Integration, 2008).
Two articles, incorporating statements from government politicians, concerned cultural integration. Health Minister Mary Harney said it was "essential that both public and private service providers recognise and understand the cultural and religious diversity of their new client base" (22\textsuperscript{nd} February 2008). Additionally Gaeltacht Minister Eamon O’ Cuiv spoke of how replicating the way migrant communities “create clusters or social networks within which their identity can flourish” could be beneficial to keeping the Irish language / culture alive. Minister O’ Cuiv stated "we can learn a lot from the Polish and Chinese communities in Dublin and other nationalities in other cities who push their language out onto the streets" (17\textsuperscript{th} December 2008). Both of these statements seem to be acknowledging the reality that immigration will be a part of Irish society for years to come. The Health Minister’s comments are positive in that they reflect her desire for the health service to take account of the ethnic diversity of their clients (and the principles advocated in the Migration Nation document which seek to avoid the creation of segregated communities). Furthermore, Minister O’ Cuiv’s comments frame the Polish community in particular, in a positive manner, demonstrating how their example could be instructive in to those seeking to preserve the Irish language.

Only one article (8\textsuperscript{th} July 2009) contained statements concerning political integration. Both of the politicians cited in this article are immigrants elected during 2009. Rotimi Adebari, said he was "delighted" to be re-elected to Portlaoise Town Council and he subsequently won a seat on Laois County Council. Additionally Katarzyna Gaborec, who had previously stood as an election candidate in her native Poland, was elected to Mullingar town council\textsuperscript{12}. She stated, "People supported me because they wanted somebody to represent them." This may suggest that her main voter base was drawn from within the immigrant community in Mullingar, and is particularly positive development given Fanning et al.’s (2007, p.3) assertion that many immigrant communities could become politically marginalised in the future (and the fact that a record total of immigrants stood in this election but few won seats). There is an onus on the existing political parties in Ireland to proactively recruit immigrants to join their parties, as it is crucial to the political integration of the migrant community. Our

\textsuperscript{12} We wish to clarify that this information is incorrect. Ms. Gaborec did stand as an election candidate for Fianna Fáil but she was not elected.
sample suggests that political integration, despite its social importance, was not a highly politicised issue in 2008 and 2009. The importance of political integration is discussed further in the conclusions to this report.

The integration of migrants in Ireland has been mostly left to occur through the economy (Fanning et al. 2007, p.1). However, the experiences of other countries would demonstrate that a more encompassing approach to integration is required, and the rhetoric of inclusion alone is likely to be insufficient (Fanning et al. 2007, p.1)
Analysis of Statements: Limerick

It would appear in the context of Limerick that comments from politicians of relevance to EU migrants rarely appear in the local print media. This is perhaps reflective of Fanning and Mutwarasibo’s (2007) assertion that immigration to Ireland has primarily been politicised in terms of asylum seeking. Articles containing relevant statements were often written specifically in response to the comments made by politicians.

Local elections 2009

On January 8th 2009 the multi-national Dell Corporation announced that it was moving production from Limerick to its Polish facility and third-party manufacturers over the next 12 months, and planned to cut 1,900 jobs at its plant in Limerick as a result. The job losses came as a major blow to the mid-west region where Dell had been the largest employer and the core of the local economy. Several thousand other jobs were said to be at risk in so-called ‘downstream’ companies which directly supplied the Dell plant. Less than one week later the chairman of the Irish Polish Cultural and Business Association, Pat O’Sullivan announced that "Polish people were not responsible for the decision. Nobody is throwing stones, but that unease is there now. We are concerned about the negative impact of the decision on the Polish community from fellow workers and Limerick people in general" (Woulfe 2009).

Against this backdrop the 2009 local elections were held on Friday 5th June. One of the candidates in the Limerick South constituency for Limerick City Council made public statements concerning EU migrants in the run up to this election which constructed immigrants as a threat to the local economy.

In an article the Limerick Leader dating from the 7th of May 2009, Councillor Jim Long is quoted as stating:

"I see little evidence that Polish people or any other non-nationals have created jobs in the city but I will go on record and confirm they are detrimental to or are the cause of massive job losses in this city and I think that should be addressed." (Limerick Leader May 7th 2009)
In making these comments, Councillor Long seems to have fallen into the trap that Conor Lenihan advocated avoiding, i.e. that of projecting fears and frustrations resulting from the recession onto vulnerable migrant workers who have in many cases been more negatively impacted by the downturn than the average Irish citizen. Internationally research suggests that frameworks of understanding similar to that disseminated by Councillor Long have in some cases been deployed to further strategic aims (van Dijk 1992). Indeed the author of the article in which the aforementioned statement appeared asserted that:

“Fine Gael's Cllr Jim Long now appears to see electoral capital in making the claim that jobs have somehow been stolen from under the noses of local people, as if Ireland has the option to ignore the rights of EU citizens now that times are tough” (Limerick Leader 7th May 2009).

In a second article published on the same date, in which his assertions were vigorously challenged by (unelected) candidates Pat O’Sullivan (President of the Irish Polish Cultural and Business Association) and Anna Banko (Fianna Fáil party member and Polish businesswoman), Councillor Long is quoted as stating:

‘I’d rather be called a racist than a traitor” (Limerick Leader 7th May 2009).

The author of the first article questioned why Fine Gael had not disassociated themselves from Councillor Long’s candidacy (Limerick Leader 7th May 2009). The response of Councillor Long’s party leader, Deputy Enda Kenny, made during a visit to Limerick, was documented in an article published on the 12th of May:

"I read the remarks and I spoke to Jim Long this morning and had a long and fruitful conversation with him about this. Migrant workers did not cause the unemployment problem in Ireland. The real problem here is the Government mismanaging the economy has failed to protect and create jobs." "Jim Long reported to me frustration he had been feeling and what was being expressed to him on the doorsteps. This is nothing unusual. All over the country I meet people who have either lost their jobs or are in fear of losing their jobs," Deputy Kenny said. Fine Gael would shortly publish a 10-point plan on immigration and integration which would deal comprehensively with all concerns expressed by Cllr Long "Jim was quite open about this and having explained this to him, he is quite prepared to say publicly that he did not wish to offend any migrant worker and that if in the course of
the remarks that he made in reporting frustrations of people on the doorstep, he is quite prepared to apologise to the Polish people. We will be in discussion with him about the Fine Gael document being published in the next 10 days.” Asked if he was happy for Cllr Long to remain as a Fine Gael candidate if he made an apology, Deputy Kenny said: "in those circumstances, yes". (Limerick Leader 12th May 2009).

Enda Kenny’s quoted statements reflect the Janus-faced possibilities of immigration policy discourses mentioned previously, in that while rejecting any assertion that immigrants are responsible for unemployment, they also give credence to Councillor Long’s ‘concerns’ by indicating that they would be addressed in forthcoming policy. Although, Deputy Kenny is cited as requiring an apology from Councillor Long, the Councillor was quoted in the same article as stating that:

‘... he has "nothing to say sorry about" in relation to his recent remarks.’ (Limerick Leader 12th May 2009).

Councillor Long, standing for Fine Gael, was re-elected to Limerick City Council in June 2009 receiving 496 first preference votes and winning the final seat on the Council for the Limerick South constituency (Limerick City Council 2010).

The economy & social welfare costs
Councillor Long’s ideological stance on immigrants proved not to be unique. The live register for May 2008 showed that a total of 9,911 people were signing on in Limerick, an increase of 2,668 since May 2007 (Fitzgibbon 2008). This figure for Limerick City and County more than doubled to 20,922 by June 2009 (CSO 2010, p.5). Within this context, other local politicians have commented publicly on the social welfare entitlements of immigrants, constructing their access to State supports as placing them in competition with the Irish citizenry for scarce resources.

In spite of negative reactions to his party colleague Councillor Long’s previous statement, in an article by Martin Byrnes published on May 26th 2009 Councillor Liam Galvin (Fine Gael) argued that the government should research measures to encourage foreign nationals to return home for the period of the recession:

‘Cllr Galvin said that 20 houses in an Abbeyfeale estate of 80 houses which he canvassed
had Eastern Europeans as residents. “I am by no means racist, and I would like to help everyone, but I say that the time has come to take people aside and tell them that they had been very welcome here when the good times meant that work was plentiful,” said Cllr Galvin. “But the time has come to say straight out that we as a country cannot afford all these benefits and that these people would be more than welcome back in five, 10 or 15 years from now, whenever things have picked up again.” Cllr Galvin said that the Government should examine the options and come up with a scheme to encourage such people to leave “The equivalent of a week’s social welfare would more than pay for the air fares,” he said. “This country is bankrupt and somebody has to shout stop, because we can’t afford to go on the way we are going. I see the day when people will go along to the local post office to find the doors locked, because the money just won’t be there.” Cllr Galvin also said that he believes that a considerable amount of fraud is also being committed through the wrongful claiming of entitlements on the part of foreign nationals. He has been told, he said, that taxi drivers are picking up foreigners at the airport and driving them straight to the welfare office and straight back to the airport again. “But the Government is taking every easy option, such as means testing old age pensioners and sending inspectors into places looking for TV licences. They’d be far better off sending in inspectors to see how much welfare and other payments are being received fraudulently,” he said. “We have to realize what is going on.” (Limerick Leader 26th May 2009).

In the above statement, Councillor Galvin begins by focusing on the numerical quantity of immigrants. Semyonov (2008) and Coenders et al (2005) suggest that public perceptions of the scale of immigration impact attitudes towards this phenomenon; the higher the perceived number of immigrants the more negative the attitudes.

Councillor Gavin’s statements serve to de-legitimate immigrants’ welfare entitlements, without consideration of their status as EU/non-EU nationals. The statements quoted also fail to relate the restrictions on access to welfare implicated by the HRC. Councillor Gavin supports his assertions regarding welfare fraud by reference to anecdotal, rather than authoritative, evidence.

In November 2009, Councillor Galvin’s party colleague, then Mayor Kevin Kiely (Fine Gael; Mayor of Limerick June 2009-2010) originated a more forceful version of Councillor Galvin’s proposals:
"I'm calling for anybody who is living in the State and who can't afford to pay for themselves to be deported after three months. We are borrowing €400 million per week to maintain our own residents and we can't afford it....During the good times it was grand but we can't afford the current situation unless the EU is willing to step in and pay for non-nationals... I'm not racist but it is very simple, we can't continue to borrow €400 million a week and the Government has to pull a halt and say enough is enough unless the EU intervenes and pays some sort of a subvention" (Limerick Leader November 11th 2009)

Mayor Kiely’s proposal was met with vigorous rejection from a number of quarters. Indeed, in the article in which the above statements appeared Pat O’Sullivan, President of the Irish-Polish Cultural and Business Association, referred to the comments as “… shocking and dangerous talk” (Limerick Leader 11th November 2009). In a statement to the Limerick Leader published the following day, the Mayor withdrew his comments and apologised for any offence they caused:

“"I fully accept that comments attributed to me by Limerick Leader reporter David Hurley were accurately recorded and I regret having made them in a way that did not accurately reflect my views. It was not my intention to cause any offence to EU nationals who are legally entitled to live in Ireland and who have contributed much to this country. I apologise if I have done so and I unreservedly withdraw my initial remarks. In my comments on foreign nationals receiving social welfare payments, I was specifically referring to those individuals who travel to Ireland with one the aim of taking advantage of our social welfare system. I am conscious of the thousands of foreign nationals who are living and working in Limerick who have made our city their home. I wish to acknowledge, as Mayor of Limerick, the huge contribution in an economic, cultural and social sense and that these people have made to the city and my comments were in no way attributed to them. My comments were also not in reference to foreign nationals who have become unemployed and are actively seeking work in Ireland. I still am of the opinion and, so are others that have approached me in recent days, that there is abuse of the Irish social welfare system. But in seeking to highlight this I inadvertently caused offence to others, which I very much regret. I hope this clarifies my statement and I will be making no further comment on the matter.” (Limerick Leader 12th November 2009).

However, in an article published the same day, the Mayor, reproduces a modified version of his original assertions:

13 This is the actual quote from the newspaper.
"I still am of the opinion and so are others, that have approached me in recent days, that there is abuse of the Irish social welfare system. But in seeking to highlight this I inadvertently caused offence to others, which I very much regret". Mayor Kevin Kiely (Limerick Leader 12th November 2009)

In the same article the Mayor’s proposals are rejected by MEP Alan Kelly (Labour):

"I find those comments outrageous, for a Mayor of a city like Limerick which has always been welcoming to people to come out with comments like that is absolutely outrageous" (Limerick Leader 12th November 2009).

and by then Minister of Defence Willie O’Dea (Fianna Fáil):

"The thing about it is, there is free movement in the EU. We can go to other members states in the EU and they can come here. That's the law. There is no need for the mayor to resign. He's entitled to his opinion like everybody else" (Limerick Leader 12th November 2009).

A third article published that day, reproduces the modified version of the Mayor’s proposal:

"The people I am talking about are the people who are abusing our lucrative social welfare system and who are flying in here from EU countries and who have no interest in obtaining employment here. I have no issue with those who have been in this country for a number of years and who are entitled to claim benefits." (Limerick Leader, 12th November 2009)

The mayors 'revised' position problematises welfare fraud by EU nationals exclusively. It repeats the assertion made by Councillor Galvin that EU nationals are flying in to claim social welfare without the provision of authoritative empirical data to support the existence or scale of this phenomenon.

The above article also reproduces MEP Alan Kelly’s call for then Mayor Kiely’s resignation. A Limerick Post article of the 14th of November 2009 also reproduces this call:

"The country is in economic turmoil at the moment and we as policy makers have a responsibility to come up with solutions, but racist comments like this have no place in the
discourse and I believe councillor Kiely should now resign” (Limerick Post November 14th 2009).

An article published in the Limerick Leader on the 17th of November 2009, which records the withdrawal of an invitation to the Mayor to open a Polish festival in Limerick, also cites Fine Gael Leader Enda Kenny’s response to Major Kiely’s comments, in which he stated that the Mayor:

“has been big enough and strong enough to withdraw this unreservedly and there the matter ends” (Limerick Leader November 17th 2009).

It is worth noting that although their number of immigrant candidates was comparable to those of other political parties at a national level, no immigrant candidate stood for Fine Gael in the 2009 local Limerick elections (Forum on Migration and Communications 2009).

Only four months after Councillor Long’s controversial statements, Deputy Kenny exhibits a similar laissez faire response to Major Kiely’s statements. The aforementioned, local elections are an important site for the political integration of community members who are not also citizens of this country. The unique opportunity to both vote and stand in local elections is a key means of political inclusion. Given the upward trend in the proportionate representation of immigrants in the population, the inclusion of immigrants among voters also has the potential to encourage Irish citizen candidates to address the needs of immigrants in their campaigns. Yet, in the above examples we see instead evidence of the Othering of immigrants on the part of some politicians and a weak response from their party leadership (and many of their fellow politicians) to these discourses. Although Enda Kenny is held to have sought to stimulate debate on immigration during the 2007 general election (Smith 2008), in the comments above dating from 2009 he fails to politicise the issue either by adopting a firm stance in condemnation or support of his party members’ statements.

This weak response to exclusionary statements on the part of party members is by no means exclusive to Fine Gael. Despite the ratification of an anti-racism protocol in
advance of the 2002 general election, a Fianna Fáil candidate (Noel O’Flynn) who was accused of having exacerbated anti-asylum seeker sentiment as part of his campaign, was not sanctioned by his party leadership (Like Councillor Long he retained his seat and indeed gained the highest number of votes in his constituency) (Fanning and Mutwarasibo 2007).

Perhaps this widespread avoidance by political parties of engagement with immigration as an issue provides an explanation as to why more than 20% of the immigrant candidates running in the 2009 local elections chose not to affiliate with any party (Forum on Migration and Communications 2009). Fanning and Mutwarasibo (2007) document the results of a survey by the African Solidarity Centre which found that by 2003 not one of the six major parties had defined policies or practises to promote the inclusion of immigrants and ethnic minorities among their ranks, either by standing in local elections or becoming party members (indeed the Progressive Democrats constitution prohibited non-EU citizens from becoming members until December 2003). Neither had they adopted initiatives designed to foster support among immigrants or ethnic minorities for their candidates. More recently, the UCD Migration and Citizenship Initiative conducted research between 2006 and 2007 on the six main political parties in Ireland. The group report that Irish political parties have done very little to promote the integration of migrants into the political sphere. Individual politicians and constituencies were found to be making an effort but it was not being replicated uniformly throughout the country (Fanning, Shaw, O’ Connell, & Williams, 2007; See also Fanning O’ Boyle and Shaw 2009 for an update on this situation).

Writing prior to the recession, Julie Smith (2008) asserted that by 2007, immigration to Ireland was not a politically charged issue. She suggested that this situation might be accounted for by the positive economic climate in which the Irish had experienced immigration to that time and raised the question as to whether this situation would persist in leaner times. Both the local Limerick elections of 2009 and the second Lisbon Treaty Referendum debate suggest that immigration is increasingly likely to be politicised in a recessionary period, following the trend predicted by researchers in this field. The potential of party leaders to ensure that the ensuing debate is reasoned and informed becomes all the more important in such times.
**Political, social and cultural integration**

The Limerick Integration Working Group (IWG) operates under the Social Inclusion Measures Committee of both city and county local authorities. Initially, the IWG was to bring together statutory, non-statutory and voluntary agencies to “… share information and best practice on working with Limerick’s culturally diverse population and provide appropriate responses to the integration needs of migrant and local communities” (Limerick Integration Working Group 2010, p.4). In 2008 the role of the Integration Working Group expanded and it became responsible for coordinating the “development of a plan for delivery of services and the implementation of activities that promote the integration of migrants in Limerick City and County” (Limerick Integration Working Group 2010, p.4). The Limerick Integration Working Group defines integration as:

> “… a long-term multidimensional and dynamic process starting from the moment of arrival in Limerick. It aims at ensuring respect for diversity and equal opportunities for the participation of all residents of Limerick irrespective of cultural or religious background, age, gender or nationality. Integration takes place through the interaction of people and implies mutual understanding as well as shared rights and responsibility”. (Limerick Integration Working Group 2010, p.4).

As such the Integration Working Group envisages the following values as prerequisites for integration: Respect for Fundamental Rights, Equality, and Participation. They believe that “All stakeholders in Limerick should strive to facilitate participation in order to make the economic, social, cultural and physical environment accessible and welcoming to migrants” (Limerick Integration Working Group 2010, p.5).

Two articles appearing in the Limerick Post carried statements from two local politicians (John Gilligan, Mayor of Limerick, June 2008-2009 and John Gallahue, Cathaoirleach of Limerick County Council, June 2008-2009) concerning the integration of migrants in Limerick. In an article entitled ‘Sprinkling City with Yuletide Flavour’ (6th December 2008) Mayor Gilligan comments on an event which was to showcase the talents of Limerick’s international community. He is reported as stating:
"Limerick has changed out of all recognition over the last few years, and not only have we built a new city, we've also welcomed a large number of new citizens from all over the world who have brought an exciting vibrancy and culture to our society. This adds to our understanding of the world and deepens our appreciation of the diverse history of these people in the areas of art, music, and lifestyles and in sharing these gifts with us, we are all enriched and grow into a more tolerant and exciting society" (6th December 2008).

This positive construction of Limerick’s immigrant community as contributing to a valuable inter-cultural dialogue was repeated by both of the aforementioned politicians in an article entitled ‘Many Cultures One Home’ (25th April 2009), which covered the launch of an art publication featuring the works of over 75 schoolchildren from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. Cathaoirleach John Gallahue argued that the publication:

"symbolises a hugely significant change that has occurred in Irish society in recent years. That change involves the coming together of people from different cultural backgrounds".

Mayor Gilligan went further and claimed that:

"Limerick & the wider region's thriving ethnic community is a testament to changing attitudes in this country and the growing realisation among Irish people of the huge benefits, social and economic, of embracing different cultures".

Given the Limerick Integration Working Groups’ definition of integration, these must be seen as very constructive statements from the two politicians. It is particularly positive to see the then first citizen of Limerick City express his gratitude for the contribution that migrants had made/ continue to make to the cultural and social life of the city. Mayor Gilligan in particular reflects the understanding that integration is the result of “ensuring respect for diversity and equal opportunities for all… and takes place through the interaction of people” (Limerick Integration Working Group 2010, p.5).
Conclusions

Political ideologies
Political elites and political parties have a significant impact on the framing of the issue of immigration (Schain 2008, p.465), which influences the general public’s attitudes towards immigration and immigrants.

Research internationally suggests that discussions on immigration pose a greater challenge for centre-right parties than for parties of the left. Messina (2009, p. 14) argues that Ireland’s mainstream political parties are “… generally pro-immigration, pro-immigrant inclusion, and formally opposed to ethnic, racial and/or religious discrimination”, yet neither have they particularly engaged with the interests of the new Irish. On the left of the political spectrum, Sinn Fein is evaluated as overtly pro-immigrant (Messina 2009, p.9), but while the Labour party is acknowledged as both engaging and identifying with immigrants to a greater degree than other political parties, Messina (2009, p.16) also argues that this is not evidenced to the extent that might be expected of a typical left-wing party. Smith (2008, p.416) critiques both Labour and Fine Gael for a tendency “to critique the ruling Fianna Fáil party less on its immigration policies so much as on its competence in implementing them” (Smith 2008, p.427) and argues that in the case of Fine Gael, in particular, there is little evidence of a distinction between the policies of that party and those of Fianna Fáil (Smith 2008, p.427).

In our sample, politicians of the left tended to be supportive of immigrants. The comments attributed to representatives of the Socialist party and Sinn Fein supported the rights of migrant workers, while the vast majority of comments attributed to representatives of Labour expressed a pro-immigrant stance. Nonetheless, one representative of the Labour party was also among those who recommended restrictive policies in relation to welfare. Parties of the Left may also experience tensions, (not in evidence in this sample, but in media coverage dating from 2007, see Smith 2008) between the concerns of their voter base regarding displacement and resource competition more generally and ideological commitments to equality and inclusion (Smith 2008). More generally, our sample was dominated by statements
from the centre-right in the form of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael representatives. To impact public understanding of immigration, parties on the left of the spectrum may need to be more strategic in communicating their messages to the public via the media.

Parties of the centre-right also encounter tensions between the ideological stance of their voter base and, for example, pro-business policies in determining their stance on immigration (Smith 2008). In this sample, statements emanating from Fianna Fáil representatives were much more commonly pro-immigrant than anti-immigrant in their orientation. However, it is worth noting that the vast majority of such pro-immigrant statements were framed as rebuttals of anti-immigrant claims and positions rather than as agenda-setting frameworks of understanding in their own right.

Smith (2008) argues that parties in opposition may find it difficult to disagree with government (economic) immigration policy without risking being portrayed as more extreme that they may wish to be (Smith 2008, pp.415-416). Statements attributed to representatives of Fine Gael were more likely to construct immigration as a social problem than those attributed to representatives of Fianna Fáil. Nonetheless, those emanating from the party spokesperson on immigration were overwhelmingly positive in orientation. Problematising statements by local Fine Gael representatives also impacted on the overall picture of this party’s stance.

While there remains little support for the far-right of the political spectrum in Ireland, our analysis demonstrates that some representatives of mainstream parties do contribute to a discourse whereby migrants are constructed as fraudulent, as burdens on the economy and as participating in ‘bogus marriages of convenience’. The fallout from this process could stigmatise immigrants in general and specific nationalities in particular in the public mind. The problematisation of entire categories of persons is particularly worrying as regards the impact it may have on inter-group relations.

This sample indicates that representatives on both the left and right of the political spectrum commonly address the issue of immigration as a social problem, whether by contributing to its framing as a problem, or by seeking to contradict its
problematisation. Across the sample as a whole, the majority of statements in support of immigrants’ rights are framed as a defence of these communities. As aforementioned in the body of this report, the rebuttal of negative framings may in fact serve to reinforce, rather than undermine, their perceived salience. Providing alternative frameworks of understanding may be more effective in redirecting debate (Hajer and Versteeg 2009). Both government and opposition party representatives are in danger of being ensnared in a reactive approach to immigration whereby the course of the debate is set by the problematisation of the issue.

**Less visible issues**

There were a number of issues related to the themes identified in our analysis, on which we did not find politicians commenting. While we acknowledge that our sample is by no means a complete record of political statements relating to EU immigrants in 2008 and 2009, their absence from our sample does suggest nonetheless that such issues did not attain a high profile during this period.

- While the comments from politicians in relation to the economy primarily focussed on the possibility of tensions developing between Irish and immigrant workers in the competition for jobs as unemployment grew, and the cost of social welfare payments to unemployed foreign workers, there were a number of important omissions from this debate. Firstly, we found an absence of statements from politicians explaining unemployed foreign workers’ social welfare entitlements to the media audience. Secondly there was little discussion of the fact that between April 2008 and April 2009, EU12 nationals were by far the largest group emigrating from the state, and immigration to Ireland from the EU12 countries evidenced the largest decline of any group, dropping from 33,700 to 13,500 (CSO 2009, p.1). It is our opinion that the inclusion of such matters would be of central importance if we are to have a balanced debate on EU migrants and the Irish economy.

- Almost all of the politicians’ statements in our sample on the issue of welfare were concerned with welfare fraud. Yet, our sample does not suggest that politicians used their media platform to explain to the public either the
Habitual Residence Condition (HRC) or the manner in which Irish emigrants in other EU countries benefit from entitlements similar to those enjoyed by EU citizens here. Our sample indicates that neither did the existence of evidence that rules governing the HRC were being applied inconsistently (Smith 2010) attain a high profile as the result of political statements. Cross national marriages are modern phenomena and one of the lasting impacts of the Celtic Tiger boom is an increase in intimate relationships involving Irish and non-Irish citizens (Piper 1997, p.332; Cottrell, 1990 cited in Chiyoko King-O’Riain, 2009). However, our sample suggests that the politicisation of cross-national marriages has focused on the perceived threat posed by ‘bogus marriages of convenience to the integrity of our borders, rather than on providing any critical commentary on the challenges posed to cross-national marriages by current immigration policy.

- In relation to education, the importance of English language supports for the integration of migrants (and how those supports could be provided given our dire economic circumstances) received a high profile. However, the same conclusion does not apply to the lack of recognition of foreign qualifications in Ireland, which is an extremely important issue, with FÁS (2006, p.7) stating that this was imperative to reduce the risks of an oversupply of migrant workers in the market for low-skilled labour. A comprehensive debate on the issue of migrants and education needs to take account of the fact that the qualifications of certain migrants are still not being recognised, which forces them to remain at lower levels of the labour market (or on social welfare) than their educational qualifications might merit (see O’ Grady 2008, p.8; Linehan & Hogan 2008).

- In relation to human trafficking, security concerns would appear to be prioritised over reference to the experiences and needs of victims of human trafficking and the State’s responsibility to these victims. Politicians were not found to have lent a high profile to the discussion of the support services required by victims of trafficking, and indeed the State’s responsibility to accommodate, protect and assist such victims.
Finally, while the sample highlights that there was commentary on the social and cultural integration of migrants, there was little media profiling of the political integration of migrants. The one article that did address this issue depended on comments from two migrants who had been elected in the local elections. Accordingly, the assertion that despite the “rhetoric of inclusion and integration there may be little real commitment… to reaching out to immigrant communities unless there are votes to be won”, which is likely to result in a large number of immigrant communities becoming politically marginalised in the future (Fanning et al. 2007, p.3), merits attention.

The low profile of these issues in political commentary contributes to their low visibility in public debate, impacting on citizens’ awareness of these issues and may ultimately impact detrimentally on how immigrants and their needs are publicly perceived and treated.

**Political leadership and immigration**

Fanning and Mutwarasibo (2007, p.442) hold that in the period to 2007 immigration to Ireland was politicised only in terms of asylum seeking, with the governing parties (Fianna Fáil and PDs) adopting a punitive stance in relation to this group. With important exceptions (see Lentin 2006 for example), analyses of political responses to immigration tend to conclude that the topic has yet to become highly politicised in an Irish context (Messina 2009; Smith 2008). The reasons for this are attributed to a variety of factors including the prosperous period within which immigration peaked; the comparative tolerance of recorded public attitudes to immigration in this period (Smith 2008); the espousal of a progressive approach to immigration by what is arguably Ireland’s most nationalistic party - Sinn Fein (O’Malley 2008, cited in Messina 2009, p. 9); the recency of Ireland’s introduction to mass immigration and the concentration of the majority of Irish political parties towards the centre of the political spectrum (Messina 2009).

Certainly our research suggests the absence of a significant ideological debate on the issue of immigration in Ireland in the period 2008-2009. Our findings also support the ongoing validity of Smith’s assertion that the opposition parities tend to criticise the Government on the implementation of their policies more so than on their content.
(Smith 2008, pp.415-416). Certainly there is room in Irish politics for greater differentiation with regard to approaches to immigration.

The experiences of other countries which have followed a similar immigration trajectory indicate that the eventual significant politicisation of this issue is highly probable, if not inevitable. The outcome of this process is not, however, pre-determined, depending on the responses of Ireland’s mainstream political parties (Messina 2009). In this context, failures by parties both in and out of government to address immigration and integration as important policy areas and the reticence of some party representatives to communicate these policy stances to the public creates a vacuum, which may be filled by those who adopt an anti-immigrant stance.

Despite widespread avoidance of participation in an ideological debate on immigration, we do however find moments in which particular issues are politicised in temporally and sometimes geographically localised ways. Statements, cited in this report, regarding exploitation of migrant workers and the social welfare entitlements of immigrants evidence this phenomenon. While, at a national level, the positions adopted in such debates are more likely to be expressed by party spokespersons on immigration14 (although rarely party leaders themselves in the statements in our sample), contributions on such issues by individuals without a party brief are prevalent in both national and particularly local debates (often the most polarised). In the absence of the guidance provided by a clear party line, members may disseminate statements which are ill-informed, anti-immigrant or which their parties would not support. Where parties fail to publicly and effectively censure such claims or proposals, we argue that they effectively give them credence. In our sample, there are examples of such failures; equally there are instances of political parties actively disassociating themselves from the comments of candidates who adopt positions which their parties choose not to support. However, to be fully effective, we argue that such acts of disassociation should include, not merely the rejection of one position, but also a clear statement of the alternative position which the party does

14 In the period relating to this research, Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, and Sinn Féin had party spokespersons on Immigration. Labour and the Green Party did not have a specific spokesperson on immigration at that time, dealing with immigration issues under the broader portfolios of Justice, Health, Education, etc.
support. Research indicates extensive misinformation and confusion among the public regarding immigration (Haynes, Devereux and Breen 2009). Political leadership therefore requires that parties counter misinformation with accurate data and provide their membership and the public with the alternative frameworks of understanding to interpret the meaning and significance of same.

Political leadership in respect of positive responses to immigration and immigrants can also manifest in the degree to which political parties themselves integrate immigrants into their membership and among their candidates. Positive statements regarding the importance of integration and inclusion may ring hollow to the public (including the immigrant community) if political parties themselves fail to include immigrants among their ranks.

The Migrant Integration Policy Index (Niessen, Huddleston and Citron, L. 2007, p. 93) allocated a score of 59/100 to Ireland with regards to policies relating to political participation. Ireland scored 100/100 on electoral rights and political liberties and was held up as an example of best practise along with Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. The inclusiveness of electoral rights with regards to local elections was specifically referenced. The practise of allowing those migrants, whose countries extend the same right to Irish citizens, to vote in parliamentary elections, was also cited, although this right currently only applies to UK citizens.

Ireland scored far lower on measures relating to political consultation and implementation policies. With regards to consultation, Ireland scored 50/100. The report notes the lack of consultation with migrants by the government with regards to national policies and the ad hoc nature of consultations at a local level. Ireland scored only 25/100 with regards to implementation policies, a measure which examines whether states actively work to inform migrants about their political rights and contribute to funding their political associations (Niessen, Huddleston and Citron, L. 2007, p. 93) In contrast, Norway, for example, was found to have persistently engaged with the migrant population to encourage voter participation in the period 1999-2007 and provides funding for migrant associations at national, regional and local levels (Niessen, Huddleston and Citron, L. 2007, p.137).
Research indicates that in the period 2007 - 2009, Ireland continued to make some progress with regards to political participation, although much room for further engagement remains. In research on the 2007 general election, Fanning, Shaw, O’Connell and Williams (2007, p.2) found that although the parties to whom they spoke shared a positive commitment to integration in principle, initiatives to implement this in practise were few. This was found to be an improvement on the situation in 2004, when parties surveyed could not identify any practical initiatives designed to recruit minority or immigrant members. Nonetheless, by 2007, none of the parties interviewed had implemented measures designed to monitor their progress regarding the recruitment, support or candidacy of immigrant and minority members and none had a “clear strategy” (Fanning, Shaw, O’Connell and Williams 2007, p.7) for engagement with immigrant voters and community members. Fanning, Shaw, O’Connell and Williams (2007, p.2) found that some political parties were actually less attentive to the issue of the political integration of immigrants than they had been in 2004, noting that: “Behind the rhetoric of inclusion and integration there may be little real commitment to reaching out to immigrant communities unless there are votes to be won …”. Political parties should be aware that in (small scale) research conducted in 2009 Fanning and O'Boyle (2010) found that Eastern European nationals were much more likely to state an intention to naturalise than might be expected given the experience of other countries. The potential for the naturalisation of EU immigrants and their children suggests that for strategic, as well as principled reasons political parties should not restrict their efforts in the area of political integration to local elections. Fanning, Shaw, O’Connell and Williams (2007, p. 15-16), note that there are arguments for extending the right to vote in national elections to resident transnational migrants and that both the Green Party and Sinn Fein have identified themselves as positively oriented to such a possibility.

By 2009 Fanning and O'Boyle (2010) note that the above situation had improved further with regards to Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael’s (other parties were not considered in this research) engagement with Polish immigrants. Each party had enlisted Polish integration officers and was actively engaged with the Polish community. While such initiatives are to be welcomed other immigrant communities should not be overlooked and the importance of measures, monitoring and mentoring to the recruitment of immigrant candidates should remain a focus.
Addressing racism

Immigration policy is inherently about the exclusion or inclusion of groups in terms of access to territory, rights and supports. The primary ground for differentiation between groups is on the basis of citizenship and the regulations determining access to citizenship in turn shape the ethnic and ‘racial’ composition of the citizenry. As such, immigration policy may be employed towards the privileging of some ethnic or racialised groups over others and generally privileges some nationalities over others. As such, immigration policy and debates thereon can be a tool of racism or anti-racism. “Politicians, through the media exercise, enormous influence on public opinion and antiracist activists and trainers have to regularly respond to the effects of what they say” (Crawley 2007, p.499). As such, we hold that that our politicians, as leaders, have a particular obligation to influence public discourse on racism in a manner that at a minimum eschews racism, and preferably advocates an anti-racist agenda.

The Anti-Racism Election Protocol for Political Parties in Ireland was developed by the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) in co-collaboration with political parties in advance of the 2002 general election. The protocol was endorsed in 2001 by Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, the Green Party, Labour, the Progressive Democrats, Sinn Féin, the Socialist Party and the Workers Party (NCCRI 2001). In signing up to the protocol the parties agreed:

- “To send a consistent and clear message to their constituents that they reject racism.
- To condemn any campaign materials or statements susceptible to incite hatred or express prejudice on the grounds of ‘race’, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origin, religious belief and membership of the Traveller Community.
- To guarantee that when engaging in on-going debate in relation to groups which are the potential targets of racism, such as asylum seekers and refugees and Travellers, that such debate is conducted in a responsible way and with respect to the dignity and rights of minority ethnic groups.
- To use appropriate and inclusive language and words when referring to people of different ethnic backgrounds, in order to avoid creating prejudice or confusion.
To inform all party-political campaigners about the intent and contents of this protocol.

To request that candidates standing for election sign the appended ‘Declaration of Intent’.’ (NCCRI 2001)

In signing the declaration of intent, candidates could make a personal commitment to the principle: “…that election campaigns are conducted in such a way that they do not incite hatred or prejudice on the grounds of ‘race’, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origin, religious belief and membership of the Traveller Community” and well as endorsing the first four points above (NCCRI 2001). However, in ratifying the protocols, political parties had already accepted responsibility for their candidates’ adherence to the protocol.

The Anti-Racism Election Protocol for Political Parties in Ireland (NCCRI 2001) is an exemplar of positive initiatives in support of anti-racist politics and demonstrates that Ireland can exhibit forward thinking in such developments. However, its implementation also demonstrates the importance of party leadership to ensuring the compliance of members with such commitments. It is notable that, although the mainstream parties largely adhered to the principles of the protocol (Chadamoyo, Fanning and Mutwarasibo 2007), Fianna Fáil did not sanction party member Noel O’Flynn when he was accused of promoting anti-asylum seeker sentiment during his campaign (Fanning and Mutwarasibo 2007). We would argue that for party commitment to such protocols, or indeed intra-party principles of anti-racism and inclusion, to be successful, party leaders must take an active role in responding effectively to contravention of these principles by their members and to avoid the practice of political expediency.

Looking to examples from other countries, it is notable that in the UK, local government also developed a related protocol with the aim of leading their communities by example. This community cohesion protocol committed council members not to “create or exacerbate divisions between different groups within the community” (Crawley 2007, p.499). This is an initiative which our research suggests might be beneficially replicated among county and city councils in Ireland and which
we believe would receive support from many local politicians whose statements, replicated in this report, already evidence an anti-racist stance.

Smith (2008) suggests that one reason for the absence of a broader immigration debate in Ireland lies in the sensitivity of the issue. “Immigration is also entangled with attitudes to race; and race and debate do not go well together” (Blainey 1994, p.1). Politicians may be loathe to engage with this subject, given that the nature of immigration policy means that it is particularly like to attract (legitimate and unjustified) accusations of racism. Certainly, this research documents that in an Irish context the framing of immigration and proposals regarding immigration policy have been accompanied by accusations of racism in a number of instances.

We would argue that it is essential to address racism where it occurs throughout society, but perhaps especially among its influential political elites. Van Dijk (1992) holds that denials of racism have become part of the strategies of political elites engaged in disseminating racist rhetoric. The problematic statements by politicians, discussed in this research, that begin with a denial of racism are noteworthy. However, it is equally the case that spurious accusations of racism may be used as a strategic tool to effectively terminate debate for reasons other than the pursuit of an anti-racist agenda. Closing down the debate, we would argue, contributes to a vacuum in political leadership and is therefore counterproductive as regards addressing racism and misinformation where it exists among the population. Guerin (2003) and Pedersen et al. (2005) both highlight that there is a difficult balance to be achieved between naming racism and maintaining an environment in which racist discourses can be counteracted and the individuals who hold such beliefs effectively engaged with. We would suggest that political parties need to educate and regulate their members in both regards if we are to have an informed debate on immigration in Ireland. Like the assertions and policies they advocate, denials (Van Dijk 1992) and accusations of racism require support.
Recommendations

- We encourage all political representatives to recognise the status of migrants as community members, constituents, potential party members and voters, and to represent them as such in their public discourse.

- We recommend that non-governmental organisations such as Doras Luimní continue to engage in a voter registration drive directed towards members of migrant communities.

- We recommend that all political parties recommit themselves to the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism’s anti-racism protocol. Such a framework is, we hold, necessary to support the anti-racist stance adopted by individual political representatives, and to mainstream this approach. Moreover, we support the reformulation of this protocol to apply to the daily exercise of political representation and office, rather than just in respect of election campaigns.

- Prior to the 2009 elections, Doras Luimní invited all local and European candidates in Limerick City and County (and political party executives) to sign up to an NCCRI originated anti-racism protocol, thus reaffirming their commitment to an anti-racist candidacy. 100 candidates stood in the local elections alone in Limerick City and Limerick County council, although only 18 signed up to the protocol. In light of this and the previous recommendation we would urge non-governmental organisations such as Doras Luimní to continue campaigning for political parties to renew their commitment to the NCCRI’s anti-racism protocol and for the extension of the protocol in line with the recommendations made above.

- We reiterate the recommendations of other such as Fanning, Shaw, O’ Connell, & Williams (2007, p.4) in advocating the further extension of the anti-racism protocol to include a commitment from all political parties to proactively cultivate migrant political participation as voters, party members and candidates for elected office.
• We urge non-governmental organisations such as Doras Luimní to continue monitoring political parties' initiatives with regard to including immigrant candidates and voters, as well as addressing the needs and interests of immigrant communities.

• It is essential that we name and address racism when it manifests, and the role of our political representatives to display leadership in this regard is critical. Political parties and representatives who make accusations of racism should support those claims.

• We encourage party leaders to enforce their own association’s commitment to principles or protocols which espouse inclusion and anti-racism, by actively responding to contravention of these principles by their members.

• We recommend that Doras Luimní address complaints regarding anti-immigrant statements directly to party executives.

• At the local level, the launch of Integrating Limerick: Limerick City and County Integration Plan 2010-2012 is to be commended, as is the focus on consultation of migrant networks which contributed to its development and is highlighted in its recommendations. We encourage Limerick local authorities to follow this achievement with the development of a community cohesion protocol, such as that developed by counterparts in the UK, which committed council members not to “create or exacerbate divisions between different groups within the community” (Crawley 2007, p.499). Limerick City council should join Galway and Dublin in becoming a signatory to the European Coalition of Cities against Racism\(^\text{15}\), which would enable them to avail of policy, technical and scientific supports in engaging with the diverse communities resident within Limerick City.

• We encourage political parties and political representatives to commit themselves to evidence-based policy making in the fields of immigration and integration.

\(^{15}\) For further information see www.unesco.org/shs/citiesgainstracism
• We urge non-governmental organisations such as Doras Luimní to continue to seek right of reply where media outlets reproduce assertions or proposals by politicians, which are misinformed or supported by reference to evidence of questionable authority.

• In the interests of transparency, we encourage all political parties to communicate their policies on immigration and integration in order to provide the public with leadership in this important area of political and public discourse.

• Party policies on immigration and integration should be clearly communicated to party members. We urge party leadership to consider that, although they may not represent party policy, a failure to publicly and effectively censure problematic claims or proposals disseminated by their membership unintentionally legitimise those statements.

• We recommend that political parties and representatives seeking to counter the problematisation of migrants proactively develop and present alternative frameworks of understanding rather than merely reactively rebutting the problematising statement. This approach is held to offer greater potential effect.

• We commend to political parties the importance of sustaining and developing the institutional framework which supports an equality agenda in Ireland. We urge that this institutional framework, consisting of agencies such as the Equality Authority, the Equality Tribunal and the National Employment Rights Authority (and, before their termination, the National Consultative Committee against Racism and Interculturalism and the National Action Plan Against Racism) be prioritised in a recessionary period, in which international experience tells us that anti-immigrant sentiment tends to increase.

• Our analysis suggests that the range of political voices represented in media discourse on immigration is limited. We assert that the mass media is an important site for disseminating ways of understanding migrants, immigration and integration. To impact public understandings of immigration, some parties may
need to be more strategic in ensuring their messages are represented in media discourse.
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